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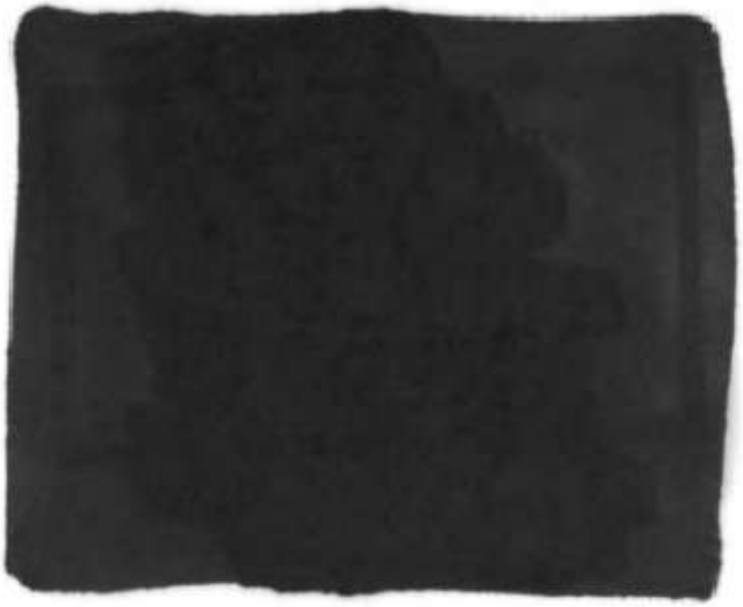

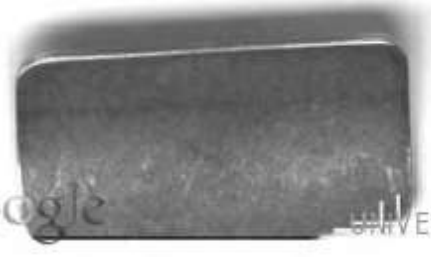

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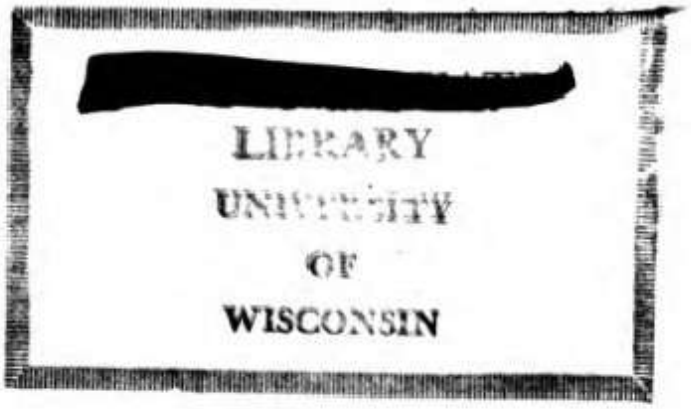

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ALEXANDER FARNESE, PRINCE OF PARMA.

From a scarce Engraving by Wierix.

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HISTORY

OF THE

UNITED NETHERLANDS

FROM THE DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT

TO THE TWELVE YEARS' TRUCE

BY

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY, D.C.L., LL.D.

CORRESPONDENT OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOL. I

WITH PORTRAITS

NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS

FRANKLIN SQUARE

1880

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HISTORY

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UNITED NETHERLANDS

FROM THE DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT
TO THE TWELVE YEARS' TRUCE–1609

BY

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY, D.C.L., LL.D.
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, ETC.

IN FOUR VOLUMES—Vol. I
1584–86

WITH PORTRAITS

NEW YORK
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PREFACE.

THE indulgence with which the History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic was received has encouraged me to prosecute my task with renewed industry.

A single word seems necessary to explain the somewhat increased proportions which the present work has assumed over the original design. The intimate connection which was formed between the Kingdom of England and the Republic of Holland, immediately after the death of William the Silent, rendered the history and the fate of the two commonwealths for a season almost identical. The years of anxiety and suspense during which the great Spanish project for subjugating England and reconquering the Netherlands, by the same invasion, was slowly matured, were of deepest import for the future destiny of those two countries and for the cause of national liberty. The deep-laid conspiracy of Spain and Rome against human rights deserves to be patiently examined, for it is one of the great lessons of history. The crisis was long and doubtful, and the health—perhaps the existence—of England and Holland, and, with them, of a great part of Christendom, was on the issue.

History has few so fruitful examples of the dangers which come from superstition and despotism, and the

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blessings which flow from the maintenance of religious and political freedom, as those afforded by the struggle between England and Holland on the one side, and Spain and Rome on the other, during the epoch which I have attempted to describe. It is for this reason that I have thought it necessary to reveal, as minutely as possible, the secret details of this conspiracy of king and priest against the people, and to show how it was baffled at last by the strong self-helping energy of two free nations combined.

The period occupied by these two volumes is therefore a short one, when counted by years, for it begins in 1584 and ends with the commencement of 1590. When estimated by the significance of events and their results for future ages, it will perhaps be deemed worthy of the close examination which it has received. With the year 1588 the crisis was past; England was safe, and the new Dutch commonwealth was thoroughly organized. It is my design, in two additional volumes, which, with the two now published, will complete the present work, to carry the history of the Republic down to the Synod of Dort. After this epoch the Thirty Years' War broke out in Germany; and it is my wish, at a future day, to retrace the history of that eventful struggle, and to combine with it the civil and military events in Holland, down to the epoch when the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War of the Netherlands were both brought to a close by the Peace of Westphalia.

The materials for the volumes now offered to the public were so abundant that it was almost impossible

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to condense them into smaller compass without doing injustice to the subject. It was desirable to throw full light on these prominent points of the history, while the law of historical perspective will allow long stretches of shadow in the succeeding portions, in which less important objects may be more slightly indicated. That I may not be thought capable of abusing the reader's confidence by inventing conversations, speeches, or letters, I would take this opportunity of stating—although I have repeated the remark in the foot-notes—that no personage in these pages is made to write or speak any words save those which, on the best historical evidence, he is known to have written or spoken.

A brief allusion to my sources of information will not seem superfluous. I have carefully studied all the leading contemporary chronicles and pamphlets of Holland, Flanders, Spain, France, Germany, and England; but, as the authorities are always indicated in the notes, it is unnecessary to give a list of them here. But by far my most valuable materials are entirely unpublished ones.

The archives of England are especially rich for the history of the sixteenth century; and it will be seen, in the course of the narrative, how largely I have drawn from those mines of historical wealth, the State Paper Office and the MS. department of the British Museum. Although both these great national depositories are in admirable order, it is to be regretted that they are not all embraced in one collection, as much trouble might then be spared to the historical student, who is now obliged to

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pass frequently from the one place to the other, in order to find different portions of the same correspondence.

From the royal archives of Holland I have obtained many most important, entirely unpublished documents, by the aid of which I have endeavoured to verify, to illustrate, or sometimes to correct, the recitals of the elder national chroniclers; and I have derived the greatest profit from the invaluable series of Archives and Correspondence of the Orange-Nassau Family, given to the world by M. Groen van Prinsterer. I desire to renew to that distinguished gentleman, and to that eminent scholar M. Bakhuyzen van den Brink, the expression of my gratitude for their constant kindness and advice during my residence at the Hague. Nothing can exceed the courtesy which has been extended to me in Holland, and I am deeply grateful for the indulgence with which my efforts to illustrate the history of the country have been received where that history is best known.

I have also been much aided by the study of a portion of the Archives of Simancas, the originals of which are in the Archives de l'Empire in Paris, and which were most liberally laid before me through the kindness of M. le Comte de La Borde.

I have, further, enjoyed an inestimable advantage in the perusal of the whole correspondence between Philip II., his ministers, and governors, relating to the affairs of the Netherlands, from the epoch at which this work commences down to that monarch's death. Copies of this correspondence have been

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carefully made from the originals at Simancas by order of the Belgian Government, under the superintendence of the eminent archivist M. Gachard, who has already published a synopsis or abridgment of a portion of it in a French translation. The translation and abridgment of so large a mass of papers, however, must necessarily occupy many years, and it may be long, therefore, before the whole of the correspondence—and particularly that portion of it relating to the epoch occupied by these volumes—sees the light. It was, therefore, of the greatest importance for me to see the documents themselves unabridged and untranslated. This privilege has been accorded me, and I desire to express my thanks to his Excellency M. van de Weyer, the distinguished representative of Belgium at the English Court, to whose friendly offices I am mainly indebted for the satisfaction of my wishes in this respect. A letter from him to his Excellency M. Rogier, Minister of the Interior in Belgium—who likewise took the most courteous interest in promoting my views—obtained for me the permission thoroughly to study this correspondence; and I passed several months in Brussels, occupied with reading the whole of it from the year 1584 to the end of the reign of Philip II.

I was thus saved a long visit to the Archives of Simancas, for it would be impossible conscientiously to write the history of the epoch without a thorough examination of the correspondence of the King and his ministers. I venture to hope, therefore—whatever judgment may be passed upon my own labours—that this

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work may be thought to possess an intrinsic value; for the various materials of which it is composed are original, and—so far as I am aware—have not been made use of by any historical writer.

I would take this opportunity to repeat my thanks to M. Gachard, Archivist of the kingdom of Belgium, for the uniform courtesy and kindness which I have received at his hands, and to bear my testimony to the skill and critical accuracy with which he has illustrated so many passages of Belgian and Spanish history.

31, Hertford-Street, May-Fair,
November 11th, 1860.

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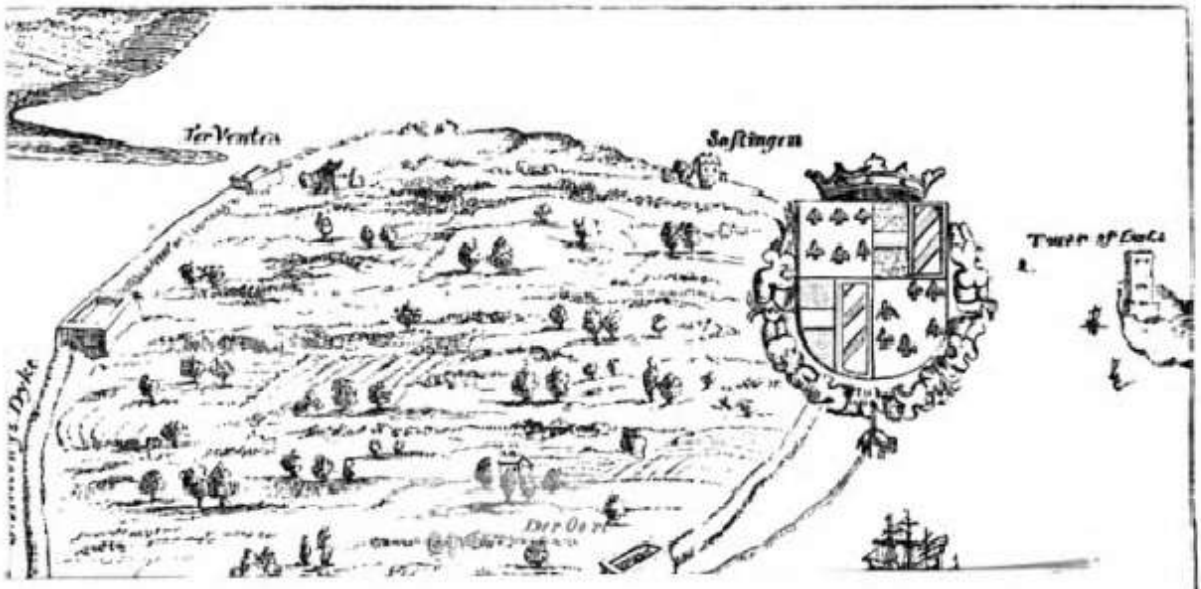

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THE UNITED NETHERLANDS.

CHAPTER I.

Murder of Orange — Extension of Protestantism — Vast Power of Spain — Religious Origin of the Revolt — Disposal of the Sovereignty — Courage of the Estates of Holland — Children of William the Silent — Provisional Council of State — Firm attitude of Holland and Zeeland — Weakness of Flanders — Fall of Ghent — Adroitness of Alexander Farnese.

WILLIAM THE SILENT, Prince of Orange, had been murdered on the 10th of July, 1584. It is difficult to imagine a more universal disaster than the one thus brought about by the hand of a single obscure fanatic. For nearly twenty years the character of the Prince had been expanding steadily as the difficulties of his situation increased. Habit, necessity, and the natural gifts of the man, had combined to invest him at last with an authority which seemed more than human. There was such general confidence in his sagacity, courage, and purity, that the nation had come to think with his brain and to act with his hand. It was natural that, for an instant, there should be a feeling as of absolute and helpless paralysis.

Whatever his technical attributes in the polity of the Netherlands—and it would be difficult to define them with perfect accuracy—there is no doubt that he stood there, the head of a commonwealth, in an attitude such as had been maintained by but few of the kings, or chiefs, or high priests of history. Assassination, a regular and almost indispensable portion of the working machinery of Philip's government, had produced, in this instance, after repeated disappointments, the result at last which had been so anxiously desired.

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The ban of the Pope and the offered gold of the King had accomplished a victory greater than any yet achieved by the armies of Spain, brilliant as had been their triumphs on the blood-stained soil of the Netherlands.

Had that "exceeding proud, neat, and spruce"[1] Doctor of Laws, William Parry, who had been busying himself at about the same time with his memorable project against the Queen of England, proved as successful as Balthazar Gerard, the fate of Christendom would have been still darker. Fortunately, that member of Parliament had made the discovery in time—not for himself, but for Elizabeth—that the "Lord was better pleased with adverbs than nouns;"[2] the well-known result being that the traitor was hanged and the Sovereign saved.

Yet such was the condition of Europe at that day. A small, dull, elderly, imperfectly-educated, patient, plodding invalid, with white hair and protruding under-jaw, and dreary visage, was sitting day after day, seldom speaking, never smiling, seven or eight hours out of every twenty-four, at a writing table covered with heaps of interminable despatches, in a cabinet far away beyond the seas and mountains, in the very heart of Spain. A clerk or two, noiselessly opening and shutting the door, from time to time, fetching fresh bundles of letters and taking away others—all written and composed by secretaries or high functionaries—and all to be scrawled over in the margin by the diligent old man in a big schoolboy's hand and style—if ever schoolboy, even in the sixteenth century, could write so illegibly or express himself so awkwardly;[3] couriers in the court-yard arriving from or departing for the uttermost parts of earth—Asia, Africa, America, Europe—to fetch and carry these interminable epistles which contained the irresponsible commands of this one individual, and were freighted with the doom and destiny of countless millions of the world's inhabitants—such was the system of government against which the Netherlands had

[1] Camden's 'Elizabeth,' ed. 1688, p. 305.
[2] Camden, p. 307.
[3] See vol. ii. of this work for instances.

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protested and revolted. It was a system under which their fields had been made desolate, their cities burned and pillaged, their men hanged, burned, drowned, or hacked to pieces; their women subjected to every outrage; and to put an end to which they had been devoting their treasure and their blood for nearly the length of one generation. It was a system, too, which, among other results, had just brought about the death of the foremost statesman of Europe, and had nearly effected simultaneously the murder of the most eminent sovereign in the world. The industrious Philip, safe and tranquil in the depths of the Escorial, saying his prayers three times a day with exemplary regularity, had just sent three bullets through the body of William the Silent at his dining-room door in Delft. "Had it only been done two years earlier," observed the patient old man, "much trouble might have been spared me; but 'tis better late than never." Sir Edward Stafford, English envoy in Paris, wrote to his government—so soon as the news of the murder reached him—that, according to his information out of the Spanish minister's own house, "the same practice that had been executed upon the Prince of Orange, there were practisers more than two or three about to execute upon her Majesty, and that within two months." Without vouching for the absolute accuracy of this intelligence, he implored the Queen to be more upon her guard than ever. "For there is no doubt," said the envoy, "that she is a chief mark to shoot at; and seeing that there were men cunning enough to inchant a man and to encourage him to kill the Prince of Orange, in the midst of Holland, and that there was a knave found desperate enough to do it, we must think hereafter that anything may be done. Therefore God preserve her Majesty."[1]

Invisible as the Grand Lama of Thibet, clothed with power

[1] Murdin's 'State Papers,' 412-415. William Herle, too, wrote from Holland, immediately after the murder, warning the Queen to be more than ever on her guard. The seminary at Dieppe, placed "upon the brim of England," was constantly sending Scotch and English assassins into their own country. "'Tis known to me," he said, "that there are entered

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as extensive and absolute as had ever been wielded by the most imperial Cæsar, Philip the Prudent, as he grew older and feebler in mind and body seemed to become more gluttonous of work,[1] more ambitious to extend his sceptre over lands which he had never seen or dreamed of seeing, more fixed in his determination to annihilate that monster Protestantism, which it had been the business of his life to combat, more eager to put to death every human creature, whether anointed monarch or humble artizan, that defended heresy or opposed his progress to universal empire.

If this enormous power, this fabulous labour, had been wielded or performed with a beneficent intention; if the man who seriously regarded himself as the owner of a third of the globe, with the inhabitants thereof, had attempted to deal with these extensive estates inherited from his ancestors with the honest intention of a thrifty landlord, an intelligent slave-owner, it would have yet been possible for a little longer to smile at the delusion, and endure the practice.

But there was another old man, who lived in another palace in another remote land, who, in his capacity of representative of Saint Peter, claimed to dispose of all the kingdoms of the earth—and had been willing to bestow them upon the man who would go down and worship him. Philip stood enfeoffed, by divine decree, of all America, the East Indies, the whole Spanish Peninsula, the better portion of Italy, the seventeen Netherlands, and many other possessions far and near; and he contemplated annexing to this extensive property the

above seven score lurking Jesuits into the realm of late, and they do secretly repair more and more to sow infection and rebellion among your subjects, and to conspire against your royal person, whom God alway, for his mercy's sake, preserve." (Herle to the Queen, 22nd July, 1584, State-Paper Office MS.) Moreover, another secret agent of Walsingham, Stephen Le Sieur, wrote shortly afterwards from Antwerp, that the Prince of Orange had been warned by persons resident in Cologne of the attempt about to be made upon his life, but had unfortunately not heeded the admonition. The same persons who had furnished that information now wrote to apprise Le Sieur that there was a similar plot on foot against the Queen. (Le Sieur to Walsingham, 7th September, 1584, State-Paper Office MS.)

[1] Longlée au Roi de France, apud Groen van Prinsterer, 'Archives et Correspondence de la Maison d'Orange Nassau, deuxième série,' tom. i. p. 29.

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kingdoms of France, of England, and Ireland. The Holy League, maintained by the sword of Guise, the pope's ban, Spanish ducats, Italian condottieri, and German mercenaries, was to exterminate heresy and establish the Spanish dominion in France. The same machinery, aided by the pistol or poniard of the assassin, was to substitute for English protestantism and England's queen the Roman Catholic religion and a foreign sovereign. "The holy league," said Duplessis-Mornay, one of the noblest characters of the age, "has destined us all to the same sacrifice. The ambition of the Spaniard, which has overleaped so many lands and seas, thinks nothing inaccessible."[1]

The Netherland revolt had therefore assumed world-wide proportions. Had it been merely the rebellion of provinces against a sovereign, the importance of the struggle would have been more local and temporary. But the period was one in which the geographical land-marks of countries were almost removed. The dividing-line ran through every state, city, and almost every family. There was a country which believed in the absolute power of the church to dictate the relations between man and his Maker, and to utterly exterminate all who disputed that position. There was another country which protested against that doctrine, and claimed, theoretically or practically, a liberty of conscience. The territory of these countries was mapped out by no visible lines, but the inhabitants of each, whether resident in France, Germany, England, or Flanders, recognised a relationship which took its root in deeper differences than those of race or language. It was not entirely a question of doctrine or dogma. A large portion of the world had become tired of the antiquated delusion of a papal supremacy over every land, and had recorded its determination, once for all, to have done with it. The transition to freedom of conscience became a necessary step, sooner or later to be taken. To establish the principle of toleration for all religions was an inevitable consequence of the Dutch revolt; although thus far, perhaps

[1] 'Mémoires et Correspondence de Duplessis-Mornay,' Paris, 1824, iii. 27.

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only one conspicuous man in advance of his age had boldly announced that doctrine and had died in its defence. But a great true thought never dies—though long buried in the earth—and the day was to come, after long years, when the seed was to ripen into a harvest of civil and religious emancipation, and when the very word toleration was to sound like an insult and an absurdity.

A vast responsibility rested upon the head of a monarch, placed as Philip II. found himself, at this great dividing point in modern history. To judge him, or any man in such a position, simply from his own point of view, is weak and illogical. History judges the man according to its point of view. It condemns or applauds the point of view itself. The point of view of a malefactor is not to excuse robbery and murder. Nor is the spirit of the age to be pleaded in defence of the evil-doer at a time when mortals were divided into almost equal troops. The age of Philip II. was also the age of William of Orange and his four brethren, of Sainte Aldegonde, of Olden-Barneveldt, of Duplessis-Mornay, La Noue, Coligny, of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin, Walsingham, Sidney, Raleigh, Queen Elizabeth, of Michael Montaigne, and William Shakspeare. It was not an age of blindness, but of glorious light. If the man whom the Maker of the Universe had permitted to be born to such boundless functions, chose to put out his own eyes that he might grope along his great pathway of duty in perpetual darkness, by his deeds he must be judged. The King perhaps firmly believed that the heretics of the Netherlands, of France, or of England, could escape eternal perdition only by being extirpated from the earth by fire and sword, and therefore, perhaps, felt it his duty to devote his life to their extermination. But he believed, still more firmly, that his own political authority, throughout his dominions, and his road to almost universal empire, lay over the bodies of those heretics. Three centuries have nearly past since this memorable epoch; and the world knows the fate of the states which accepted the dogma which it was Philip's life-work to enforce, and of those who protested

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against the system. The Spanish and Italian Peninsulas have had a different history from that which records the career of France, Prussia, the Dutch Commonwealth, the British Empire, the Transatlantic Republic.

Yet the contest between those Seven meagre Provinces upon the sand-banks of the North Sea, and the great Spanish Empire, seemed at the moment with which we are now occupied a sufficiently desperate one. Throw a glance upon the map of Europe. Look at the broad magnificent Spanish Peninsula, stretching across eight degrees of latitude and ten of longitude, commanding the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, with a genial climate, warmed in winter by the vast furnace of Africa, and protected from the scorching heats of summer by shady mountain and forest, and temperate breezes from either ocean. A generous southern territory, flowing with wine and oil, and all the richest gifts of a bountiful nature—splendid cities—the new and daily expanding Madrid, rich in the trophies of the most artistic period of the modern world—Cadiz, as populous at that day as London, seated by the straits where the ancient and modern systems of traffic were blending like the mingling of the two oceans—Granada, the ancient wealthy seat of the fallen Moors—Toledo, Valladolid, and Lisbon, chief city of the recently-conquered kingdom of Portugal, counting, with its suburbs, a larger population than any city, excepting Paris, in Europe, the mother of distant colonies, and the capital of the rapidly-developing traffic with both the Indies—these were some of the treasures of Spain herself.[1] But she possessed Sicily also, the better portion of Italy, and important dependencies in Africa, while the famous maritime discoveries of the age had all enured to her aggrandizement. The world seemed suddenly to have expanded its wings from East to West, only to bear the fortunate Spanish Empire to the most dizzy heights of wealth and power. The most accomplished generals, the most disciplined and daring infantry the world has ever known, the best-equipped and most extensive navy, royal and mercantile,

[1] Compare Guicciardini, 'Belgicæ Descript.' Amst. 1660, p. 210 *seq.*

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of the age, were at the absolute command of the sovereign. Such was Spain.

Turn now to the north-western corner of Europe. A morsel of territory, attached by a slight sand-hook to the continent, and half-submerged by the stormy waters of the German Ocean—this was Holland. A rude climate, with long, dark, rigorous, winters, and brief summers, a territory, the mere wash of three great rivers, which had fertilized happier portions of Europe only to desolate and overwhelm this less-favoured land, a soil so ungrateful, that if the whole of its four hundred thousand acres of arable land had been sowed with grain,[1] it could not feed the labourers alone, and a population largely estimated at one million of souls—these were the characteristics of the Province which already had begun to give its name to the new commonwealth. The isles of Zeeland—entangled in the coils of deep slow-moving rivers, or combating the ocean without—and the ancient episcopate of Utrecht, formed the only other Provinces that had quite shaken off the foreign yoke. In Friesland, the important city of Groningen was still held for the King, while Bois-le-Duc, Zutphen, besides other places in Gelderland and North Brabant, also in possession of the royalists, made the position of those provinces precarious.

The limit of the Spanish or "obedient" Provinces, on the one hand, and of the United Provinces on the other, cannot, therefore, be briefly and distinctly stated. The memorable treason—or, as it was called, the "reconciliation" of the Walloon Provinces in the year 1583-4—had placed the Provinces of Hainault, Arthois, Douay, with the flourishing cities Arras, Valenciennes, Lille, Tournay, and others—all Celtic Flanders, in short—in the grasp of Spain. Cambray was still held by the French governor, Seigneur de Balagny, who had taken advantage of the Duke of Anjou's treachery to the States, to establish himself in an unrecognized but practical petty sovereignty, in defiance both of France and Spain; while East Flanders and South Brabant still remained a dis-

[1] 'Mémoires de Jean de Wit,' La Haye, 1709-18-19.

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puted territory, and the immediate field of contest. With these limitations, it may be assumed, for general purposes, that the territory of the United States was that of the modern Kingdom of the Netherlands, while the obedient Provinces occupied what is now the territory of Belgium.

Such, then, were the combatants in the great eighty years' war for civil and religious liberty; sixteen of which had now passed away. On the one side, one of the most powerful and populous world-empires of history, then in the zenith of its prosperity; on the other hand, a slender group of cities, governed by merchants and artisans, and planted precariously upon a meagre, unstable soil. A million and a half of souls against the autocrat of a third part of the known world. The contest seemed as desperate as the cause was certainly sacred; but it had ceased to be a local contest. For the history which is to occupy us in these volumes is not exclusively the history of Holland. It is the story of the great combat between despotism, sacerdotal and regal, and the spirit of rational human liberty. The tragedy opened in the Netherlands, and its main scenes were long enacted there; but as the ambition of Spain expanded, and as the resistance to the principle which she represented became more general, other nations were, of necessity, involved in the struggle. There came to be one country, the citizens of which were the Leaguers; and another country, whose inhabitants were Protestants. And in this lay the distinction between freedom and absolutism. The religious question swallowed all the others. There was never a period in the early history of the Dutch revolt when the Provinces would not have returned to their obedience, could they have been assured of enjoying liberty of conscience or religious peace; nor was there ever a single moment in Philip II.'s life in which he wavered in his fixed determination never to listen to such a claim. The quarrel was in its nature irreconcilable and eternal as the warfare between wrong and right; and the establishment of a comparative civil liberty in Europe and America was the result of the religious war of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

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The struggle lasted eighty years, but the prize was worth the contest.

The object of the war between the Netherlands and Spain was not, therefore, primarily, a rebellion against established authority for the maintenance of civil rights. To preserve these rights was secondary. The first cause was religion. The Provinces had been fighting for years against the Inquisition. Had they not taken arms, the Inquisition would have been established in the Netherlands, and very probaby in England, and England might have become in its turn a Province of the Spanish Empire.

The death of William the Silent produced a sudden change in the political arrangements of the liberated Netherlands. During the year 1583, the United Provinces had elected Francis, Duke of Anjou, to be Duke of Brabant and sovereign of the whole country, under certain constitutional provisions enumerated in articles of solemn compact. That compact had been grossly violated. The Duke had made a treacherous attempt to possess himself of absolute power and to seize several important cities. He had been signally defeated in Antwerp, and obliged to leave the country, covered with ignominy. The States had then consulted William of Orange as to the course to be taken in the emergency. The Prince had told them that their choice was triple. They might reconcile themselves with Spain, and abandon the contest for religious liberty which they had so long been waging; they might reconcile themselves with Anjou, notwithstanding that he had so utterly forfeited all claims to their consideration; or they might fight the matter out with Spain single-handed. The last course was, in his opinion, the most eligible one, and he was ready to sacrifice his life to its furtherance. It was, however, indispensable, should that policy be adopted, that much larger supplies should be voted than had hitherto been raised, and, in general, that a much more extensive and elevated spirit of patriotism should manifest itself than had hitherto been displayed.

It was, on the whole, decided to make a second arrange-

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ment with the Duke of Anjou, Queen Elizabeth warmly urging that course. At the same time, however, that articles of agreement were drawn up for the installation of Anjou as sovereign of the United Provinces, the Prince had himself consented to accept the title of Count of Holland, under an ample constitutional charter, dictated by his own lips. Neither Anjou nor Orange lived to be inaugurated into the offices thus bestowed upon them. The Duke died at Château-Thierry on the 10th June, and the Prince was assassinated a month later at Delft.

What now was the political position of the United Provinces at this juncture? The sovereignty which had been held by the Estates, ready to be conferred respectively upon Anjou and Orange, remained in the hands of the Estates. There was no opposition to this theory. No more enlarged view of the social compact had yet been taken. The people, as such, claimed no sovereignty. Had any champion claimed it for them they would hardly have understood him. The nation dealt with facts. After abjuring Philip in 1581—an act which had been accomplished by the Estates—the same Estates in general assembly had exercised sovereign power, and had twice disposed of that sovereign power by electing a hereditary ruler. Their right and their power to do this had been disputed by none, save by the deposed monarch in Spain. Having the sovereignty to dispose of, it seemed logical that the Estates might keep it, if so inclined. They did keep it, but only in trust. While Orange lived, he might often have been elected sovereign of all the Provinces, could he have been induced to consent. After his death, the Estates retained, *ex necessitate*, the sovereignty; and it will soon be related what they intended to do with it. One thing is very certain, that neither Orange, while he lived, nor the Estates, after his death, were actuated in their policy by personal ambition. It will be seen that the first object of the Estates was to dispossess themselves of the sovereignty which had again fallen into their hands.

What were the Estates? Without, at the present moment,

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any farther inquiries into that constitutional system which had been long consolidating itself, and was destined to exist upon a firmer basis for centuries longer, it will be sufficient to observe, that the great characteristic of the Netherland government was the municipality. Each Province contained a large number of cities, which were governed by a board of magistrates, varying in number from twenty to forty. This college, called the Vroedschap (Assembly of Sages), consisted of the most notable citizens, and was a self-electing body—a close corporation—the members being appointed for life, from the citizens at large. Whenever vacancies occurred from death or loss of citizenship, the college chose new members—sometimes immediately, sometimes by means of a double or triple selection of names, the choice of one from among which was offered to the stadtholder of the province. This functionary was appointed by the Count, as he was called, whether Duke of Bavaria or of Burgundy, Emperor, or King. After the abjuration of Philip, the governors were appointed by the Estates of each Province.

The Sage-Men chose annually a board of senators, or schepens, whose functions were mainly judicial; and there were generally two, and sometimes three, burgomasters, appointed in the same way.[1] This was the popular branch of the Estates. But, besides this body of representatives, were the nobles, men of ancient lineage and large possessions, who had exercised, according to the general feudal law of Europe, high, low, and intermediate jurisdiction upon their estates, and had long been recognized as an integral part of the body politic, having the right to appear, through delegates of their order, in the provincial and in the general assemblies.

Regarded as a machine for bringing the most decided political capacities into the administration of public affairs, and for organising the most practical opposition to the system of religious tyranny, the Netherland constitution was a healthy, and, for the age, an enlightened one. The office-holders, it is obvious, were not greedy for the spoils of office;

[1] Meteren, *loc. cit.*

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for it was, unfortunately, often the case that their necessary expenses in the service of the state were not defrayed. The people raised enormous contributions for carrying on the war; but they could not afford to be extremely generous to their faithful servants.

Thus constituted was the commonwealth upon the death of William the Silent. The gloom produced by that event was tragical. Never in human history was a more poignant and universal sorrow for the death of any individual. The despair was, for a brief season, absolute; but it was soon succeeded by more lofty sentiments. It seemed, after they had laid their hero in the tomb, as though his spirit still hovered above the nation which he had loved so well, and was inspiring it with a portion of his own energy and wisdom.[1]

Even on the very day of the murder, the Estates of Holland, then sitting at Delft, passed a resolution "to maintain the good cause, with God's help, to the uttermost, without sparing gold or blood." This decree was communicated to Admiral de Warmont, to Count Hohenlo, to William Lewis of Nassau, and to other commanders by land and sea. At the same time, the sixteen members—for no

10th July, 1584.

[1] "The people of that country," wrote Walsingham, ten days after the death of Orange, to Davison, "have hitherto shewed themselves but little amazed with the accident. Rather, the wickedness of the deed hath hardened their stomachs to hold out as long as they shall have any means of defence." $\frac{12}{22}$ July, 1584, S. P. Off. MS.

William Herle, also, a secret and most capable emissary of the English government, was visiting the cities of Holland and Zeeland at the time of the tragic occurrence. He described, in vivid colours, the courageous attitude maintained by all persons in the midst of the general gloom. "The recent death of the Prince of Orange," he wrote to Queen Elizabeth, "has created no astonishment (dismay) at all, either of the people or magistrates, by fear or division, but rather generally animated them with a great resolution of courage and hatred engraved in them, to revenge the foulness of the fact committed on the person of the prince by the tyrant of Spain, and to defend their liberties advisedly against him and his adherents by all means that God has given them, to the uttermost portion of their substance, and the last drop of their blood." $\frac{22}{1}$ July, 1584, S. P. Office MS. Aug.,

In the city of Dort he was waited upon by the magistrates, and received by them with singular respect, as the known, although secret, representative of the Queen. "They repaired to me immediately," he wrote, "not as men condoling their estate, or craving courage to be instilled into them—though wanting now a head—but irritated above measure to be revenged, and to defend all their heads, so apparently sought for by the King of Spain, in murdering their head, the Prince of Orange." (Ibid.)

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greater number happened to be present at the session—addressed letters to their absent colleagues, informing them of the calamity which had befallen them, summoning them at once to conference, and urging an immediate convocation of the Estates of all the Provinces in General Assembly. They also addressed strong letters of encouragement, mingled with manly condolence, upon the common affliction, to prominent military and naval commanders and civil functionaries, begging them to "bear themselves manfully and valiantly, without faltering in the least on account of the great misfortune which had occurred, or allowing themselves to be seduced by any one from the union of the States."[1] Among these sixteen were Van Zuylen, Van Nyvelt, the Seigneur de Warmont, the Advocate of Holland, Paul Buys, Joost de Menin, and John van Olden-Barneveldt. A noble example was thus set at once to their fellow citizens by these their representatives—a manful step taken forward in the path where Orange had so long been leading.

The next movement, after the last solemn obsequies had been rendered to the Prince was to provide for the immediate wants of his family. For the man who had gone into the revolt with almost royal revenues, left his estate so embarrassed that his carpets, tapestries, household linen—nay, even his silver spoons, and the very clothes of his wardrobe—were disposed of at auction for the benefit of his creditors.[2] He left eleven children—a son and daughter by the first wife, a son and daughter by Anna of Saxony, six daughters by Charlotte of Bourbon, and an infant, Frederic Henry, born six months before his death. The eldest son, Philip William, had been a captive in Spain for seventeen years, having been kidnapped from school, in Leyden, in the year 1567. He

[1] 'Van Wyn et al. Aanmerkingen op Wagenaar,' viii. 1–5.

[2] His extensive estates were all deeply mortgaged, and he left absolutely no ready money. "Both Buis and Meetkerk told me," wrote Herle to Queen Elizabeth, "that the prince had not in ready money at his death one hundred guilders, which was a note of his popularity." $\frac{22}{1}$ July, Aug., 1588, S. P. Office MS. Compare Wagenaar, viii. 12–15.

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had already become so thoroughly Hispaniolized under the masterly treatment of the King and the Jesuits, that even his face had lost all resemblance to the type of his heroic family, and had acquired a sinister, gloomy, forbidding expression, most painful to contemplate. All of good that he had retained was a reverence for his father's name—a sentiment which he had manifested to an extravagant extent on a memorable occasion in Madrid, by throwing out of window, and killing on the spot, a Spanish officer who had dared to mention the great Prince with insult.

The next son was Maurice, then seventeen years of age, a handsome youth, with dark blue eyes, well-chiselled features, and full red lips, who had already manifested a courage and concentration of character beyond his years. The son of William the Silent, the grandson of Maurice of Saxony, whom he resembled in visage and character, he was summoned by every drop of blood in his veins to do life-long battle with the spirit of Spanish absolutism, and he was already girding himself for his life's work. He assumed at once for his device a fallen oak, with a young sapling springing from its root. His motto,—"Tandem fit surculus arbor," "the twig shall yet become a tree"—was to be nobly justified by his career.[1]

The remaining son, then a six months' child, was also destined to high fortunes, and to win an enduring name in his country's history. For the present he remained with his mother, the noble Louisa de Coligny, who had thus seen, at long intervals, her father and two husbands fall victims to the Spanish policy; for it is as certain that Philip knew beforehand, and testified his approbation of, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, as that he was the murderer of Orange.

The Estates of Holland implored the widowed Princess to remain in their territority, settling a liberal allowance

[1] "The Count Maurice, with whom I was, most gracious Sovereign," said Herle, "is a gentleman of the age of seventeen years, one of great towardness, good presence, and courage, flaxen-haired, endued with a singular wit, and no less learned for his time. He somewhat resembles the countenance and spirit of his grandfather of the mother's side." (Herle to the Queen, MS. just cited.) Compare Meteren, xii. 214.

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upon herself and her child, and she fixed her residence at Leyden.[1]

But her position was most melancholy. Married in youth to the Seigneur de Teligny, a young noble of distinguished qualities, she had soon become both a widow and an orphan in the dread night of St. Bartholomew. She had made her own escape to Switzerland; and ten years afterwards she had united herself in marriage with the Prince of Orange. At the age of thirty-two, she now found herself desolate and wretched in a foreign land, where she had never felt thoroughly at home. The widow and children of William the Silent were almost without the necessaries of life. "I hardly know," wrote the Princess to her brother-in-law, Count John, "how the children and I are to maintain ourselves according to the honour of the house. May God provide for us in his bounty, and certainly we have much need of it."[2] Accustomed to the more luxurious civilisation of France, she had been amused rather than annoyed, when, on her first arrival in Holland for her nuptials, she found herself making the journey from Rotterdam to Delft in an open cart without springs, instead of the well-balanced coaches to which she had been used, arriving, as might have been expected, "much bruised and shaken." Such had become the primitive simplicity of William the Silent's household.[3] But on his death, in embarrassed circumstances, it was still more straightened. She had no cause either to love Leyden, for, after the assassination of her husband, a brutal preacher, Hakkius by name, had seized that opportunity for denouncing the French marriage, and the sumptuous christening of the infant in January, as the deeds which had provoked the wrath of God and righteous chastisement.[4] To remain there in her widowhood, with that six months' child, "sole pledge of her dead lord, her consolation and only pleasure,"[5] as she pathetically expressed herself, was sufficiently painful, and she had been inclined to fix her residence in Flushing, in the edifice which

[1] Wagenaar, 'Vaderlandsche Historie,' viii. 8 *seq.*; Van Wyn op Wagenaar, viii. 5 *seq.*, 16 *seq.*
[2] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c. 2 S., i. 98.
[3] Du Maurier, 'Mémoires,' 182.
[4] Van Wyn op Wagenaar, viii. 19.
[5] Groen v. Prinsterer *ubi sup.*

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had belonged to her husband, as Marquis of Vere. She had been persuaded, however, to remain in Holland, although "complaining, at first, somewhat of the unkindness of the people."[1]

A small well-formed woman, with delicate features, exquisite complexion, and very beautiful dark eyes, that seemed in after-years, as they looked from beneath her coif, to be dim with unshed tears; with remarkable powers of mind, angelic sweetness of disposition, a winning manner, and a gentle voice, Louisa de Coligny became soon dear to the rough Hollanders, and was ever a disinterested and valuable monitress both to her own child and to his elder brother Maurice.[2]

Very soon afterwards the States General established a State Council, as a provisional executive board, for the term of three months, for the Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, and such parts of Flanders and Brabant as still remained in the Union. At the head of this body was placed young Maurice, who accepted the responsible position, after three days' deliberation. The young man had been completing his education, with a liberal allowance from Holland and Zeeland, at the University of Leyden; and such had been their tender care for the child of so many hopes, that the Estates had given particular and solemn warning, by resolution, to his governor during the previous summer, on no account to allow him to approach the sea-shore, lest he should be kidnapped by the Prince of Parma, who had then some war-vessels cruising on the coast.[3]

The salary of Maurice was now fixed at thirty thousand

[1] MS. letter of Herle.

[2] "I visited the Princess of Orange by her own request," said Herle, a few days after the death of the Prince, "and found her in a most dark melancholic little chamber. 'T was a twice sorrowful sight to behold her heaviness and apparel augmented by the woefulness of the place; and truly the perplexity was great that I found her in, not only for the consideration of things past, but for that which might follow hereafter, her afflictions having been great. She was accompanied by the Princess Chimay, who was newly come to Delft, and no less dolorous in another degree than she, but truly a virtuous and wise lady, whatsoever, under correction, hath been otherwise interpreted of her." (Herle's MS., before cited.)

[3] 'Resol. Holl.,' 11th August, 1584. bl. 294; Wagenaar, viii. 6.

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florins a year, while each of the councillors was allowed fifteen hundred annually, out of which stipend he was to support at least one servant, without making any claim for travelling or other incidental expenses.[1]

The Council consisted of three members from Brabant, two from Flanders, four from Holland, three from Zeeland, two from Utrecht, one from Mechlin, and three from Friesland—eighteen in all. They were empowered and enjoined to levy troops by land and sea, and to appoint naval and military officers; to establish courts of admiralty, to expend the moneys voted by the States, to maintain the ancient privileges of the country, and to see that all troops in service of the Provinces made oath of fidelity to the Union. Diplomatic relations, questions of peace and war, the treaty-making power, were not entrusted to the Council, without the knowledge and consent of the States General, which body was to be convoked twice a year by the State Council.[2]

Thus the Provinces in the hour of danger and darkness were true to themselves, and were far from giving way to a despondency which under the circumstances would not have been unnatural.

For the waves of bitterness were rolling far and wide around them. A medal, struck in Holland at this period, represented a dismasted hulk reeling through the tempest. The motto, "incertum quo fata ferent" (who knows whither fate is sweeping her?) expressed most vividly the shipwrecked condition of the country. Alexander of Parma, the most accomplished general and one of the most adroit statesmen of the age, was swift to take advantage of the calamity which had now befallen the rebellious Provinces. Had he been better provided with men and money, the cause of the States might have seemed hopeless. He addressed many letters to the States General, to the magistracies of various cities, and to individuals, affecting to consider that with the death of Orange had died all authority, as well as all motive for continuing the contest with Spain. He offered

[1] Wagenaar, viii. 8; Van Wyn op Wagenaar, viii. 12. [2] Ibid.

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easy terms of reconciliation with the discarded monarch—always reserving, however, as a matter of course, the religious question—for it was as well known to the States as to Parma that there was no hope of Philip making concessions upon that important point.

In Holland and Zeeland the Prince's blandishments were of no avail. His letters received in various towns of those Provinces, offered, said one who saw them, "almost everything they would have or demand, even till they should repent."[1] But the bait was not taken. Individuals and municipalities were alike stanch, remembering well that faith was not to be kept with heretics. The example was followed by the Estates of other Provinces, and all sent in to the General Assembly, soon in session at Delft, "their absolute and irrevocable authority to their deputies to stand to that which they, the said States General, should dispose of as to their persons, goods and country; a resolution and agreement which never concurred before among them, to this day, in what age or government soever."[2]

It was decreed that no motion of agreement "with the tyrant of Spain" should be entertained either publicly or privately, "under pain to be reputed ill patriots." It was also enacted in the city of Dort that any man that brought letter or message from the enemy to any private person "should be forthwith hanged." This was expeditious and business-like. The same city likewise took the lead in recording its determination by public act, and proclaiming it by sound of trumpet, "to live and die in the cause now undertaken."[3]

In Flanders and Brabant the spirit was less noble. Those Provinces were nearly lost already. Bruges seconded Parma's efforts to induce its sister-city Ghent to imitate its own baseness in surrendering without a struggle; and that powerful, turbulent, but most anarchical little commonwealth was but too ready to listen to the voice of the tempter. "The ducats of Spain, Madam, are trotting about in such fashion," wrote envoy Des Pruneaux to Catharine de' Medici, "that they have

[1] Herle to the Queen, MS. before cited. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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vanquished a great quantity of courages. Your Majesties, too, must employ money if you wish to advance one step."[1] No man knew better than Parma how to employ such golden rhetoric to win back a wavering rebel to his loyalty, but he was not always provided with a sufficient store of those practical arguments.

He was, moreover, not strong in the field, although he was far superior to the States at this contingency. He had, besides his garrisons, something above 18,000 men. The Provinces had hardly 3000 foot and 2500 horse, and these were mostly lying in the neighbourhood of Zutphen.[2] Alexander was threatening at the same time Ghent, Dendermonde, Mechlin, Brussels, and Antwerp. These five powerful cities lie in a narrow circle, at distances varying from six miles to thirty, and are, as it were, strung together upon the Scheldt, by which river, or its tributary, the Senne, they are all threaded. It would have been impossible for Parma, with 100,000 men at his back, to undertake a regular and simultaneous siege of these important places. His purpose was to isolate them from each other and from the rest of the country, by obtaining the control of the great river, and so to reduce them by famine. The scheme was a masterly one, but even the consummate ability of Farnese would have proved inadequate to the undertaking, had not the preliminary assassination of Orange made the task comparatively easy. Treason, faint-heartedness, jealousy, were the fatal allies that the Governor-General had reckoned upon, and with reason, in the council-rooms of these cities. The terms he offered were liberal. Pardon, permission for soldiers to retreat with technical honour, liberty to choose between apostacy to the reformed religion or exile, with a period of two years granted to the conscientious for the winding up of their affairs; these were the conditions, which seemed flattering, now that the well-known voice which had so often silenced the Flemish palterers and intriguers was for ever hushed.

17th Aug., 1584. Upon the 17th August Dendermonde surrendered, and no lives were taken save those of two

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c., 4. [2] Wagenaar, viii. 13.

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preachers, one of whom was hanged, while the other was drowned. Upon the 7th September Vilvoorde capitulated, by which event the water-communication between Brussels and Antwerp was cut off. Ghent, now thoroughly disheartened, treated with Parma likewise; and upon the 17th September made its reconciliation with the King.[1] The surrender of so strong and important a place was as disastrous to the cause of the patriots as it was disgraceful to the citizens themselves. It was, however, the result of an intrigue which had been long spinning, although the thread had been abruptly, and, as it was hoped, conclusively, severed several months before. During the early part of the year, after the reconciliation of Bruges with the King—an event brought about by the duplicity and adroitness of Prince Chimay—the same machinery had been diligently and almost successfully employed to produce a like result in Ghent. Champagny, brother of the famous Cardinal Granvelle, had been under arrest for six years in that city. His imprisonment was not a strict one however, and he avenged himself for what he considered very unjust treatment at the hands of the patriots, by completely abandoning a cause which he had once begun to favour. A man of singular ability, courage, and energy, distinguished both for military and diplomatic services, he was a formidable enemy to the party from which he was now for ever estranged. As early as April of this year, secret emissaries of Parma, dealing with Champagny in his nominal prison, and with the disaffected burghers at large, had been on the point of effecting an arrangement with the royal governor. The negotiation had been suddenly brought to a close by the discovery of a flagrant attempt by Imbize, one of the secret adherents of the King, to sell the city of Dendermonde, of which he was governor, to Parma.[2] For this crime he had been brought to Ghent for trial, and then publicly beheaded. The incident came in aid of the eloquence of Orange, who, up to the latest moment of his life, had been

[1] Meteren, xii. 216, 217.

[2] See 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' vol. iii. chap. vi., and the authorities there cited; Everhard van Reyd, 'Historie der Nederlandscher Oorlogen,' ed. 1650; iii. 47.

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most urgent in his appeals to the patriotic hearts of Ghent, not to abandon the great cause of the union and of liberty. William the Silent knew full well, that after the withdrawal of the great keystone-city of Ghent, the chasm between the Celtic-Catholic and the Flemish-Calvinist Netherlands could hardly be bridged again. Orange was now dead. The negotiations with France, too, on which those of the Ghenters who still held true to the national cause had fastened their hopes, had previously been brought to a stand-still by the death of Anjou; and Champagny, notwithstanding the disaster to Imbize, became more active than ever. A private agent, whom the municpal government had despatched to the French court for assistance, was not more successful than his character and course of conduct would have seemed to warrant; for during his residence in Paris, he had been always drunk, and generally abusive. This was not good diplomacy, particularly on the part of an agent from a weak municipality to a haughty and most undecided government.

"They found at this court," wrote Stafford to Walsingham, "great fault with his manner of dealing that was sent from Gaunt. He was scarce sober from one end of the week to the other, and stood so much on his tiptoes to have present answer within three days, or else that they of Gaunt *could tell where* to bestow themselves. They sent him away after keeping him three weeks, and he went off in great dudgeon, swearing by yea and nay that he will make report thereafter."[1]

Accordingly, they of Ghent did bestow themselves very soon thereafter upon the King of Spain. The terms were considered liberal, but there was, of course, no thought of conceding the great object for which the patriots were contending—religious liberty. The municipal privileges—such as they might prove to be worth under the interpretation of a royal governor and beneath the guns of a citadel filled with Spanish troops—were to be guaranteed; those of the inhabitants who did not choose to go to mass were allowed two years to wind up their affairs before going into perpetual

[1] Stafford to Walsingham, 27th July, 1584, in Murdin, ii. pp. 412-415.

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exile, provided they behaved themselves "without scandal;" while on the other hand, the King's authority as Count of Flanders was to be fully recognised, and all the dispossessed monks and abbots to be restored to their property.[1]

Accordingly, Champagny was rewarded for his exertions by being released from prison and receiving the appointment of governor of the city: and, after a very brief interval, about one-half of the population, the most enterprising of its merchants and manufacturers, the most industrious of its artizans, emigrated to Holland and Zeeland.[2] The noble city of Ghent —then as large as Paris, thoroughly surrounded with moats, and fortified with bulwarks, ravelins, and counterscarps, constructed of earth, during the previous two years, at great expense, and provided with bread and meat, powder and shot, enough to last a year—was ignominiously surrendered. The population, already a very reduced and slender one for the great extent of the place and its former importance, had been estimated at 70,000.[3] The number of houses was 35,000, so that as the inhabitants were soon farther reduced to one-half, there remained but one individual to each house. On the other hand, the twenty-five monasteries and convents in the town were repeopled—with how much advantage as a set-off to the thousands of spinners and weavers who had wandered away, and who in the flourishing days of Ghent had sent gangs of workmen through the streets "whose tramp was like that of an army"—may be sufficiently estimated by the result.

The fall of Brussels was deferred till March, and that of Mechlin (19th July, 1585) and of Antwerp (19th August, 1585), till Midsummer of the following year; but the surrender of Ghent foreshadowed the fate of Flanders and Brabant. Ostend and Sluys, however, were still in the hands of the patriots, and with them the control of the whole Flemish coast. The command of the sea was destined to remain for centuries with the new republic.

10th March, 1585.

[1] Meteren, xii. 217; V. Reyd, iii. 47; Le Petit, 'Grande Chronique de Hollande,' ed. 1601, xiv. 409, 500.

[2] Meteren, *ubi sup.*

[3] Guicciardini, p. 207.

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The Prince of Parma, thus encouraged by the great success of his intrigues, was determined to achieve still greater triumphs with his arms, and steadily proceeded with his large design of closing the Scheldt and bringing about the fall of Antwerp. The details of that siege—one of the most brilliant military operations of the age and one of the most memorable in its results—will be given, as a connected whole, in a subsequent series of chapters. For the present, it will be better for the reader who wishes a clear view of European politics at this epoch, and of the position of the Netherlands, to give his attention to the web of diplomatic negotiation and court-intrigue which had been slowly spreading over the leading states of Christendom, and in which the fate of the world was involved. If diplomatic adroitness consists mainly in the power to deceive, never were more adroit diplomatists than those of the sixteenth century. It would, however, be absurd to deny them a various range of abilities ; and the history of no other age can show more subtle, comprehensive, indefatigable—but, it must also be added, often unscrupulous—intellects engaged in the great game of politics in which the highest interests of millions were the stakes, than were those of several leading minds in England, France, Germany, and Spain. With such statesmen the burgher-diplomatists of the new-born commonwealth had to measure themselves ; and the result was to show whether or not they could hold their own in the cabinet as on the field.

For the present, however, the new state was unconscious of its latent importance. The new-risen republic remained for a season nebulous, and ready to unsphere itself so soon as the relative attraction of other great powers should determine its absorption. By the death of Anjou and of Orange the United Netherlands had become a sovereign state, an independent republic ; but they stood with that sovereignty in their hands, offering it alternately, not to the highest bidder, but to the power that would be willing to accept their allegiance, on the sole condition of assisting them in the maintenance of their religious freedom.

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CHAPTER II.

Relations of the Republic to France—Queen's Severity towards Catholics and Calvinists — Relative Positions of England and France — Timidity of Germany — Apathy of Protestant Germany — Indignation of the Netherlanders — Henry III. of France — The King and his Minions — Henry of Guise — Henry of Navarre — Power of France — Embassy of the States to France — Ignominious position of the Envoys — Views of the French Huguenots — Efforts to procure Annexation — Success of Des Pruneaux.

THE Prince of Orange had always favoured a French policy. He had ever felt a stronger reliance upon the support of France than upon that of any other power. This was not unreasonable, and so long as he lived, the tendency of the Netherlands had been in that direction. It had never been the wish of England to acquire the sovereignty of the Provinces. In France on the contrary, the Queen Dowager, Catharine de' Medici, had always coveted that sovereignty for her darling Francis of Alençon; and the design had been favoured, so far as any policy could be favoured, by the impotent monarch who occupied the French throne.

The religion of the United Netherlands was Calvinistic. There were also many Anabaptists in the country. The Queen of England hated Anabaptists, Calvinists, and other sectarians, and banished them from her realms on pain of imprisonment and confiscation of property.[1] As firmly opposed as was her father to the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, she felt much of the paternal reluctance to accept the spirit of the Reformation. Henry Tudor hanged the men who believed in the Pope, and burnt alive those who disbelieved in transubstantiation, auricular confession, and the other 'Six Articles.' His daughter, whatever her secret religious convictions, was stanch in her resistance to Rome,

[1] Camden, i. 48.

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and too enlightened a monarch not to see wherein the greatness and glory of England were to be found; but she had no thought of tolerating liberty of conscience. All opposed to the Church of England, whether Papists or Puritans, were denounced as heretics, and as such imprisoned or banished. "To allow churches with contrary rites and ceremonies," said Elizabeth, "were nothing else but to sow religion out of religion, to distract good men's minds, to cherish factious men's humours, to disturb religion and commonwealth, and mingle divine and human things; which were a thing in deed evil, in example worst of all; to our own subjects hurtful, and to themselves to whom it is granted, neither greatly commodious, nor yet at all safe."[1] The words were addressed, it is true, to Papists, but there is very little doubt that Anabaptists or any other heretics would have received a similar reply, had they, too, ventured to demand the right of public worship. It may even be said that the Romanists in the earlier days of Elizabeth's reign fared better than the Calvinists. The Queen neither banished nor imprisoned the Catholics. She did not enter their houses to disturb their private religious ceremonies, or to inquire into their consciences. This was milder treatment than the burning alive, burying alive, hanging, and drowning, which had been dealt out to the English and the Netherland heretics by Philip and by Mary, but it was not the spirit which William the Silent had been wont to manifest in his measures towards Anabaptists and Papists alike. Moreover, the Prince could hardly forget that of the nine thousand four hundred Catholic ecclesiastics who held benefices at the death of Queen Mary, all had renounced the Pope on the accession of Queen Elizabeth, and acknowledged her as the head of the church, saving only one hundred and eighty-nine individuals.[2] In the hearts of the nine thousand two hundred and eleven others, it might be thought perhaps that some tenderness for the religion from which they had so suddenly been converted, might linger, while it could hardly be hoped that they would seek to incul-

[1] Camden, i. 32. [2] Ibid., i. 28.

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cate in the minds of their flocks or of their sovereign any connivance with the doctrines of Geneva.

When, at a later period, the plotting of Catholics, suborned by the Pope and Philip, against the throne and person of the Queen, made more rigorous measures necessary; when it was thought indispensable to execute as traitors those Roman seedlings—seminary priests and their disciples—who went about preaching to the Queen's subjects the duty of carrying out the bull by which the Bishop of Rome had deposed and excommunicated their sovereign, and that "it was a meritorious act to kill such princes as were excommunicate,"[1] even then, the men who preached and practised treason and murder experienced no severer treatment than that which other "heretics" had met with at the Queen's hands. Jesuits and Popish priests were, by Act of Parliament, ordered to depart the realm within forty days.[2] Those who should afterwards return to the kingdom were to be held guilty of high treason. Students in the foreign seminaries were commanded to return within six months and recant, or be held guilty of high treason. Parents and guardians supplying money to such students abroad were to incur the penalty of a præmunire—perpetual exile, namely, with loss of all their goods.

Many seminary priests and others were annually executed in England under these laws, throughout the Queen's reign, but nominally at least they were hanged not as Papists, but as traitors; not because they taught transubstantiation, ecclesiastical celibacy, auricular confession, or even Papal supremacy, but because they taught treason and murder—because they preached the necessity of killing the Queen. It was not so easy, however, to defend or even comprehend the banishment and imprisonment of those who without conspiring against the Queen's life or throne, desired to see the Church of England reformed according to the Church of Geneva. Yet there is no doubt that many sectaries experienced much inhuman treatment for such delinquency, both in the early and the later years of Elizabeth's reign.[4]

[1] Camden, iii. 336. [2] Ibid, iii. 309. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. 107, 469.

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There was another consideration, which had its due weight in this balance, and that was the respective succession to the throne in the two kingdoms of France and England. Mary Stuart, the Catholic, the niece of the Guises, emblem and exponent of all that was most Roman in Europe, the sworn friend of Philip, the mortal foe to all heresy, was the legitimate successor to Elizabeth. Although that sovereign had ever refused to recognize that claim; holding that to confirm Mary in the succession was to "lay her own winding sheet before her eyes, yea, to make her own grave, while she liveth and looketh on;"[1] and although the unfortunate claimant of two thrones was a prisoner in her enemy's hands, yet, so long as she lived, there was little security for Protestantism, even in Elizabeth's lifetime, and less still in case of her sudden death. On the other hand, not only were the various politico-religious forces of France kept in equilibrium by their action upon each other—so that it was reasonable to believe that the House of Valois, however Catholic itself, would be always compelled by the fast-expanding strength of French Calvinism, to observe faithfully a compact to tolerate the Netherland churches—but, upon the death of Henry III. the crown would be legitimately placed upon the head of the great champion and chief of the Huguenots, Henry of Navarre.

It was not unnatural, therefore, that the Prince of Orange, a Calvinist himself, should expect more sympathy with the Netherland reformers in France than in England. A large proportion of the population of that kingdom, including an influential part of the nobility, was of the Huguenot persuasion, and the religious peace, established by royal edict, had endured so long, that the reformers of France and the Netherlands had begun to believe in the royal clemency, and to confide in the royal word. Orange did not live to see the actual formation of the Holy League, and could only guess at its secrets.

Moreover, it should be remembered that France at that day was a more formidable state than England, a more

[1] Camden, i. 54.

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dangerous enemy, and, as it was believed, a more efficient protector. The England of the period, glorious as it was for its own and all future ages, was not the great British Empire of to-day. On the contrary, it was what would now be considered, statistically speaking, a rather petty power. The England of Elizabeth, Walsingham, Burghley, Drake, and Raleigh, of Spenser and Shakspeare, hardly numbered a larger population than now dwells in its capital and immediate suburbs. It had neither standing army nor considerable royal navy. It was full of conspirators, daring and unscrupulous, loyal to none save to Mary of Scotland, Philip of Spain, and the Pope of Rome, and untiring in their efforts to bring about a general rebellion. With Ireland at its side, nominally a subject province, but in a state of chronic insurrection—a perpetual hot-bed for Spanish conspiracy and stratagem; with Scotland at its back, a foreign country, with half its population exasperated enemies of England, and the rest but doubtful friends, and with the legitimate sovereign of that country, "the daughter of debate, who discord still did sow,"[1] a prisoner in Elizabeth's hands, the central point around which treason was constantly crystallizing itself,—it was not strange that with the known views of the Queen on the subject of the reformed Dutch religion, England should seem less desirable as a protector for the Netherlands than the neighbouring kingdom of France.

Elizabeth was a great sovereign, whose genius Orange always appreciated, in a comparatively feeble realm. Henry of Valois was the contemptible monarch of a powerful state, and might be led by others to produce incalculable mischief or considerable good. Notwithstanding the massacre of St. Bartholomew, therefore, and the more recent "French fury" of Antwerp, Orange had been willing to countenance fresh negociations with France.

Elizabeth, too, it should never be forgotten, was, if not over generous, at least consistent and loyal in her policy towards the Provinces. She was not precisely jealous of France, as

[1] Sonnet by Queen Elizabeth.

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has been unjustly intimated on distinguished authority,[1] for she strongly advocated the renewed offer of the sovereignty to Anjou, after his memorable expulsion from the Provinces.[2] At that period, moreover, not only her own love-coquetries with Anjou were over, but he was endeavouring with all his might, though in secret, to make a match with the younger Infanta of Spain.[3] Elizabeth furthered the negociation with France, both publicly and privately. It will soon be narrated how those negociations prospered.

If then England were out of the question, where, except in France, should the Netherlanders, not deeming themselves capable of standing alone, seek for protection and support?

We have seen the extensive and almost ubiquitous power of Spain. Where she did not command as sovereign, she was almost equally formidable as an ally. The Emperor of Germany was the nephew and the brother-in-law of Philip, and a strict Catholic besides. Little aid was to be expected from him or the lands under his control for the cause of the Netherland revolt. Rudolph hated his brother-in-law, but lived in mortal fear of him. He was also in perpetual dread of the Grand Turk. That formidable potentate, not then the "sick man" whose precarious condition and territorial inheritance cause so much anxiety in modern days, was, it is true, sufficiently occupied for the moment in Persia, and had been sustaining there a series of sanguinary defeats. He was all the more anxious to remain upon good terms with Philip, and had recently sent him a complimentary embassy,[4] together with some rather choice presents, among which were "four lions, twelve unicorns, and two horses coloured white, black, and blue."[5] Notwithstanding these pacific manifesta-

[1] 'H. Grotii Annalium,' v. 126, ed. 1658, Amst.

[2] 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' iii. chap. vi., and MS. Letter of Queen Elizabeth, cited in note.

[3] 'Collection de Lettres relatives aux Negotiations sur le Project de Mariage du Duc d'Anjou avec une des Infantes d'Espagne, et aux Affaires traictées de part et d'autre pour les Pays Bas, Cambray, la succession de Portugal,' &c. Bib. Imp. de France, Brienne MS.

[4] De Thou, 'Hist. Univ.' ix. 209 *seq.*

[5] Meteren, xiii. 233; Le Petit, xiv. 515.

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tions towards the West, however, and in spite of the truce with the German Empire which the Turk had just renewed for nine years,—Rudolph and his servants still trembled at every report from the East.

"He is much deceived," wrote Busbecq, Rudolph's ambassador in Paris, "who doubts that the Turk has sought any thing by this long Persian war, but to protect his back, and prepare the way, after subduing that enemy, to the extermination of all Christendom, and that he will then, with all his might, wage an unequal warfare with us, in which the existence of the Empire will be at stake." [1]

The envoy expressed, at the same period, however, still greater awe of Spain. "It is to no one," he wrote, "endowed with good judgment, in the least obscure, that the Spanish nation, greedy of empire, will never be quiet, even with their great power, but will seek for the dominion of the rest of Christendom. How much remains beyond what they have already acquired? Afterwards, there will soon be no liberty, no dignity, for other princes and republics. That single nation will be arbiter of all things, than which nothing can be more miserable, nothing more degrading. It cannot be doubted that all kings, princes, and states, whose safety or dignity is dear to them, would willingly associate in arms to extinguish the common conflagration. The death of the Catholic king would seem the great opportunity *miscendis rebus.*" [2]

Unfortunately neither Busbecq's master nor any other king or prince manifested any of this commendable alacrity to "take up arms against the conflagration." Germany was in a shiver at every breeze from East or West—trembling alike before Philip and Amurath. The Papists were making rapid progress, the land being undermined by the steady and stealthy encroachments of the Jesuits. Lord Burghley sent many copies of his pamphlet, in Latin, French, and Italian, against the Seminaries, to Gebhard Truchsess; and the de-

[1] 'Busbequii Epistolae ad Rudolphum II.,' Brux., 1631, p. 152-3.

[2] Ibid., p. 124-126.

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posed archbishop made himself busy in translating that wholesome production into German, and in dispersing it "all Germany over." The work, setting duly forth "that the executions of priests in England were not for religion but for treason," was "marvellously liked" in the Netherlands. "In uttering the truth," said Herle, "'tis likely to do great good;" and he added, that Duke Augustus of Saxony "did now see so far into the sect of Jesuits, and to their inward mischiefs, as to become their open enemy, and to make friends against them in the Empire." [1]

The love of Truchsess for Agnes Mansfeld had created disaster not only for himself but for Germany. The whole electorate of Cologne had become the constant seat of partisan warfare, and the resort of organised bands of brigands. Villages were burned and rifled, highways infested, cities threatened, and the whole country subjected to perpetual black mail (brandschatzung)—fire-insurance levied by the incendiaries in person—by the supporters of the rival bishops. Truchsess had fled to Delft, where he had been countenanced and supported by Orange. Two cities still held for him, Rheinberg and Neuss. On the other hand, his rival, Ernest of Bavaria, supported by Philip II., and the occasional guest of Alexander of Parma, had not yet succeeded in establishing a strong foothold in the territory. Two pauper archbishops, without men or means of their own, were thus pushed forward and back, like puppets, by the contending highwaymen on either side; while robbery and murder, under the name of Protestantism or Catholicism, were for a time the only motive or result of the contest.

Thus along the Rhine, as well as the Maas and the Scheldt, the fires of civil war were ever burning. Deeper within the heart of Germany, there was more tranquillity; but it was the tranquillity rather of paralysis than of health. A fearful account was slowly accumulating, which was evidently to be settled only by one of the most horrible wars which history has ever recorded. Meantime there was apathy where there

[1] Herle to Queen Elizabeth, 22nd July, 1584, MS. before cited.

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should have been enthusiasm; parsimony and cowardice where generous and combined effort were more necessary than ever; sloth without security. The Protestant princes, growing fat and contented on the spoils of the church, lent but a deaf ear to the moans of Truchsess, forgetting that their neighbour's blazing roof was likely soon to fire their own. "They understand better, *proximus sum egomet mihi*," wrote Lord Willoughby from Kronenburg, "than they have learned, *humani nihil a me alienum puto*. These German princes continue still in their lethargy, careless of the state of others, and dreaming of their ubiquity, and some of them, it is thought, inclining to be Spanish or Popish more of late than heretofore."[1]

The beggared archbishop, more forlorn than ever since the death of his great patron, cried woe from his resting-place in Delft, upon Protestant Germany. His tones seemed almost prophetic of the thirty years' wrath to blaze forth in the next generation. "Courage is wanting to the people throughout Germany," he wrote to William Lewis of Nassau. "We are becoming the laughing-stock of the nations. Make sheep of yourselves, and the wolf will eat you. We shall find our destruction in our immoderate desire for peace. Spain is making a Papistical league in Germany. Therefore is Assonleville despatched thither, and that's the reason why our trash of priests are so insolent in the empire. 'Tis astonishing how they are triumphing on all sides. God will smite them. Thou dear God! What are our evangelists about in Germany? Asleep on both ears. Dormiunt in utramque aurem. I doubt they will be suddenly enough awakened one day, and the cry will be, 'Who'd have thought it?' Then they will be for getting oil for the lamp, for shutting the stable-door when the steed is stolen,"[2] and so on, with a string of homely proverbs worthy of Sancho Panza, or landgrave William of Hesse.[3]

[1] Willoughby to Burghley, in Wright's 'Queen Elizabeth and her Times,' vol. ii. 275.

[2] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c., i. 9.

[3] The statesmen of England were

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In truth, one of the most painful features in the general aspect of affairs was the coldness of the German Protestants towards the Netherlands. The enmity between Lutherans and Calvinists was almost as fatal as that between Protestants and Papists. There was even a talk, at a little later period, of excluding those of the "reformed" church from the benefits

too sagacious not to see the importance to Protestant Germany of sustaining the ex-elector, if to sustain him were possible. But to this end it was necessary that the German princes, whom it most nearly concerned, should unite in his support. Queen Elizabeth had authorized a subsidy to enable Truchsess to carry on the war; but his Bavarian competitor was backed by the power of Spain, and was himself of higher rank and larger resources.

"No man," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "wishes better success than myself to the elector, knowing how greatly it importeth the common cause of religion that he should be upholden, and the benefit that those distressed countries, where you now are, may receive by way of diversion through his employment; for that Spain, and his minister the Prince of Parma, must not see the Bishop of Liege quail. Yet when I consider, upon view of the report of the conference between you and the said elector, how little appearance is of any great assistance that we shall have, and that the prince-electors whom the cause doth touch, especially Saxony and Brandenburg, have as yet no disposition to deal therein, *as though the conservation of the liberty of Germany did in no respect touch them*, I see no great reason to hope that this enterprize will be accompanied with that good success that both I wish and is also looked for here." (30th Dec., 1584. S. P. Office MS.)

It was therefore necessary, in the opinion of the English government, to move warily in the matter. For remote allies to expend their strength in sustaining the sinking elector, while the Protestants nearest him looked upon his struggles with folded arms, seemed superfluous and unreasonable. "For it is hard," said Walsingham, "for men of judgment to think that he, having no great likelihood of support than yet appeareth he hath, shall be able to prevail against a bishop of Liege, by birth more noble than himself, already possessed of the most part of the bishopric, who will not lack any assistance that the Catholic princes can yield him. As for the supports promised by the kings of Denmark and of Navarre, being in respect of the others but weak and far distant in place, 'tis very doubtful, before the Elector can take any profit thereof, that his cause may miscarry, unless it shall be through God's goodness upholden." (Ibid.)

But, in truth, the Protestant princes of Germany were most lukewarm in the matter, and the complaints of poor Truchsess were founded upon very accurate knowledge as to the sentiments of his compatriots. "By letters received from Germany, as well from Casimir (elector-palatine) as others," continued Walsingham, "I do not find any other forwardness in those that are thought the best affected towards him there, than to *wish well* unto him. But because that help which consists in well-wishing groweth fruitless, unless it be accompanied by effects, which the dulness of the Almaine nature easily yieldeth not until the disease grow desperate, I cannot but advise you, for the Queen's honour, to induce him to make it very probable unto you, that the support now yielded by her Majesty is like to work that effect which he pretendeth." (Ibid.)

Otherwise it was cautiously suggested by the secretary, that the envoy would "do well to forbear to be over-forward in delivering of the money."

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of the peace of Passau. The princes had got the Augsburg confession and the abbey-lands into the bargain; the peasants had got the Augsburg confession without the abbey-lands, and were to believe exactly what their masters believed. This was the German-Lutheran sixteenth-century idea of religious freedom. Neither prince nor peasant stirred in behalf of the struggling Christians in the United Provinces, battling, year after year, knee-deep in blood, amid blazing cities and inundated fields, breast to breast with the yellow-jerkined pikemen of Spain and Italy, with the axe and the faggot and the rack of the Holy Inquisition distinctly visible behind them. Such were the realities which occupied the Netherlanders in those days, not watery beams of theological moonshine, fantastical catechism-making, intermingled with scenes of riot and wantonness, which drove old John of Nassau half frantic; "with banquetting and guzzling, drinking and devouring, with unchristian flaunting and wastefulness of apparel, with extravagant and wanton dancing, and other lewd abominations;"[1] all which, the firm old reformer prophesied, would lead to the destruction of Germany.

For the mass, slow moving but apparently irresistible, of Spanish and papistical absolutism was gradually closing over Christendom. The Netherlands were the wedge by which alone the solid bulk could be riven asunder. It was the cause of German, of French, of English liberty, for which the Provinces were contending. It was not surprising that they were bitter, getting nothing in their hour of distress from the land of Luther but dogmas and Augsburg catechisms instead of money and gunpowder, and seeing German reiters galloping daily to reinforce the army of Parma in exchange for Spanish ducats.

Brave old La Noue, with the iron arm, noblest of Frenchmen and Huguenots—who had just spent five years in Spanish bondage, writing military discourses in a reeking dungeon, filled with toads and vermin, after fighting the battle of liberty for a life-time, and with his brave son already in the

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c., i. 227.

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Netherlands emulating his father's valour on the same field —denounced at a little later day, the lukewarmness of Protestant Germany with whimsical vehemence:—"I am astounded," he cried, "that these princes are not ashamed of themselves; doing nothing while they see the oppressed cut to pieces at their gates. When will God grant me grace to place me among those who are doing their duty, and afar from those who do nothing, and who ought to know that the cause is a common one. If I am ever caught dancing the German cotillon, or playing the German flute, or eating pike with German sauce, I hope it may be flung in my teeth."[1]

The great league of the Pope and Philip was steadily consolidating itself, and there were but gloomy prospects for the counter-league in Germany. There was no hope but in England and France. For the reasons already indicated, the Prince of Orange, taking counsel with the Estates, had resolved to try the French policy once more. The balance of power in Europe, which no man in Christendom so well understood as he, was to be established by maintaining (he thought) the equilibrium between France and Spain. In the antagonism of those two great realms lay the only hope for Dutch or European liberty. Notwithstanding the treason of Anjou, therefore, it had been decided to renew negociations with that Prince. On the death of the Duke, the envoys of the States were accordingly instructed to make the offer to King Henry III. which had been intended for his brother. That proposition was the sovereignty of all the Netherlands, save Holland and Zeeland, under a constitution maintaining the reformed religion and the ancient laws and privileges of the respective provinces.

But the death of Francis of Anjou had brought about a considerable change in French policy. It was now more sharply defined than ever, a right-angled triangle of almost mathematical precision. The three Henrys and their partizans divided the realm into three hostile camps—threatening each

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c., i. 85.

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other in simulated peace since the treaty of Fleix (1580), which had put an end to the "lover's war" of the preceding year,—Henry of Valois, Henry of Guise, and Henry of Navarre.

Henry III., last of the Valois line, was now thirty-three years of age. Less than king, less even than man, he was one of those unfortunate personages who seem as if born to make the idea of royalty ridiculous, and to test the capacity of mankind to eat and drink humiliation as if it were wholesome food. It proved how deeply engraved in men's minds of that century was the necessity of kingship, when the hardy Netherlanders, who had abjured one tyrant, and had been fighting a generation long rather than return to him, were now willing to accept the sovereignty of a thing like Henry of Valois.

He had not been born without natural gifts, such as Heaven rarely denies to prince or peasant; but the courage which he once possessed had been exhausted on the field of Moncontour, his manhood had been left behind him at Venice, and such wit as Heaven had endowed him withal was now expended in darting viperous epigrams at court-ladies whom he was only capable of dishonouring by calumny, and whose charms he burned to outrival in the estimation of his minions. For the monarch of France was not unfrequently pleased to attire himself like a woman and a harlot. With silken flounces, jewelled stomacher, and painted face, with pearls of great price adorning his bared neck and breast, and satin-slippered feet, of whose delicate shape and size he was justly vain, it was his delight to pass his days and nights in a ceaseless round of gorgeous festivals, tourneys, processions, masquerades, banquets, and balls, the cost of which glittering frivolities caused the popular burthen and the popular execration to grow, from day to day, more intolerable and more audible. Surrounded by a gang of "minions," the most debauched and the most desperate of France, whose bedizened dresses exhaled perfumes throughout Paris, and whose sanguinary encounters dyed every street in blood, Henry

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lived a life of what he called pleasure, careless of what might come after, for he was the last of his race. The fortunes of his minions rose higher and higher, as their crimes rendered them more and more estimable in the eyes of a King who took a woman's pride in the valour of such champions to his weakness, and more odious to a people whose miserable homes were made even more miserable, that the coffers of a few court-favourites might be filled. Now sauntering, full-dressed, in the public promenades, with ghastly little death's heads strung upon his sumptuous garments, and fragments of human bones dangling among his orders of knighthood—playing at cup and ball as he walked, and followed by a few select courtiers who gravely pursued the same exciting occupation—now presiding like a queen of beauty at a tournament to assign the prize of valour, and now, by the advice of his mother, going about the streets in robes of penitence, telling his beads as he went, that the populace might be edified by his piety, and solemnly offering up prayers in the churches that the blessing of an heir might be vouchsafed to him,—Henry of Valois seemed straining every nerve in order to bring himself and his great office into contempt.

As orthodox as he was profligate, he hated the Huguenots, who sought his protection and who could have saved his throne, as cordially as he loved the Jesuits, who passed their lives in secret plottings against his authority and his person, or in fierce denunciations from the Paris pulpits against his manifold crimes. Next to an exquisite and sanguinary fop, he dearly loved a monk. The presence of a friar, he said, exerted as agreeable an effect upon his mind as the most delicate and gentle tickling could produce upon his body;[1] and he was destined to have a fuller dose of that charming presence than he coveted.

His party—for he was but the nominal chief of a faction, *tanquam unus ex nobis*—was the party in possession—the office-holders' party; the spoilsmen, whose purpose was to rob

[1] De Thou, x. 667.

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the exchequer and to enrich themselves. His minions—for the favourites were called by no other name—were even more hated, because less despised than the King. Attired in cloth of gold—for silk and satin were grown too coarse a material for them—with their little velvet porringer-caps stuck on the sides of their heads, with their long hair stiff with pomatum, and their heads set inside a well-starched ruff a foot wide, "like St. John's head in a charger," as a splenetic contemporary observed,[1] with a nimbus of musk and violet-powder enveloping them as they passed before vulgar mortals, these rapacious and insolent courtiers were the impersonation of extortion and oppression to the Parisian populace. They were supposed, not unjustly, to pass their lives in dancing, blasphemy, duelling, dicing, and intrigue, in following the King about like hounds, fawning at his feet, and showing their teeth to all besides; and for virtues such as these they were rewarded by the highest offices in church, camp, and state, while new taxes and imposts were invented almost daily to feed their avarice and supply their extravagance. France, doomed to feel the beak and talons of these harpies in its entrails, impoverished by a government that robbed her at home while it humiliated her abroad, struggled vainly in its misery, and was now on the verge of another series of internecine combats—civil war seeming the only alternative to a voluptuous and licentious peace.[2]

"We all stood here at gaze," wrote ambassador Stafford to Walsingham, "looking for some great matter to come of this sudden journey to Lyons; but, as far as men can find, *parturiunt montes*, for there hath been nothing but dancing and banquetting from one house to another, bravery in

[1] 'L'Estoile, Registre Journal de Henry III.,' ed. Michaud et Poujoulat, p. 72, *seq.*

[2] "Quant à leur habit il excede
Tout leur bien et tout leur tresor,
Car le mignon qui tout consomme,
Ne se vest plus en gentilhomme,
Mais comme un prince de drap d'or:
Et pour mieux contenter
Leur jeu, leur pompe, leur bobance,
Et leur trop prodigue dépense,
Il faut tous les jours inventer
Nouveaux impôts, nouvelles tailles,
Qu'il faut du profond des entrailles
Des pauvres sujets arracher,
Qui trainent leurs chetives vies
Sous la griffe de ces harpies,
Qui avalent tout sans macher," &c.
L'Estoile, ubi sup.

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apparel, glittering like the sun."[1] He mentioned that the Duke of Epernon's horse, taking fright at a red cloak, had backed over a precipice, breaking his own neck, while his master's shoulder merely was put out of joint. At the same time the Duke of Joyeuse, coming over Mount Cenis, on his return from Savoy, had broken his wrist. The people, he said, would rather they had both broken their necks "than any other joint, the King having racked the nation for their sakes, as he hath done."[2] Stafford expressed much compassion for the French in the plight in which they found themselves. "Unhappy people!" he cried, "to have such a King, who seeketh nothing but to impoverish them to enrich a couple, and who careth not what cometh after his death, so that he may rove on while he liveth, and careth neither for doing his own estate good nor his neighbour's state harm." Sir Edward added, however, in a philosophizing vein, worthy of Corporal Nym, that, "seeing we cannot be so happy as to have a King to concur with us to do us any good, yet we are happy to have one that his humour serveth him not to concur with others to do us harm; and 'tis a wisdom for us to follow these humours, that we may keep him still in that humour, and from hearkening to others that may egg him on to worse."[3]

It was a dark hour for France, and rarely has a great nation been reduced to a lower level by a feeble and abandoned government than she was at that moment under the distaff of Henry III. Society was corrupted to its core. "There is no more truth, no more justice, no more mercy," moaned President L'Etoile. "To slander, to lie, to rob, to wench, to steal; all things are permitted save to do right and to speak the truth." Impiety the most cynical, debauchery the most unveiled, public and unpunished homicides, private murders by what was called magic, by poison, by hired assassins, crimes natural, unnatural, and preternatural, were the common characteristics of the time.[4] All

[1] Stafford to Walsingham, 24th Aug., 1584, in Murdin, ii. 415-419.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Stafford to Walsingham, *ubi sup.*
[4] 'L'Estoile,' 97, 98; Perefixe, 'Histoire du Roi Henri le Grand,' ed. 1816, p. 29.

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posts and charges were venal. Great offices of justice were sold to the highest bidder, and that which was thus purchased by wholesale was retailed in the same fashion. Unhappy the pauper client who dreamed of justice at the hands of law. The great ecclesiastical benefices were equally matter of merchandise, and married men, women, unborn children, enjoyed revenues as dignitaries of the church. Infants came into the world, it was said, like the mitre-fish, stamped with the emblems of place.[1]

"'Twas impossible," said L'Etoile, "to find a crab so tortuous and backsliding as the government."[2]

This was the aspect of the first of the three factions in France. Such was the Henry at its head, the representative of royalty.

Henry with the Scar, Duke of Guise, the well-known chief of the house of Lorraine, was the chief of the extreme papistical party. He was now thirty-four years of age, tall, stately, with a dark, martial face and dangerous eyes, which Antonio Moro loved to paint; a physiognomy made still more expressive by the arquebus-shot which had damaged his left cheek at the fight near Château-Thierry and gained him his name of Balafré. Although one of the most turbulent and restless plotters of that plotting age, he was yet thought more slow and heavy in character than subtle, Teutonic rather than Italian. He was the idol of the Parisian burghers. The grocers, the market-men, the members of the arquebus and crossbow clubs, all doated on him. The fishwomen worshipped him as a god. He was the defender of the good old religion under which Paris and the other cities of France had thriven, the uncompromising opponent of the new-fangled doctrines which western clothiers, and dyers, and tapestry-workers, had adopted, and which the nobles of the mountain-country, the penniless chevaliers of Bearn and Gascony and Guienne, were ceaselessly taking the field and plunging France into misery and bloodshed to support. But for the Balafré and Madam League—as the great Spanish Catholic

[1] Perefixe, 'L'Estoile,' *ubi sup.*

[2] 'L'Estoile,' *ubi sup.*

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conspiracy against the liberties of France, and of England, and of all Europe, was affectionately termed by the Paris populace—honest Catholics would fare no better in France than they did in England, where, as it was well known, they were every day subjected to fearful tortures. The shop-windows were filled with coloured engravings, representing, in exaggerated fashion, the sufferings of the English Catholics under bloody Elizabeth, or Jezebel, as she was called; and as the gaping burghers stopped to ponder over these works of art, there were ever present, as if by accident, some persons of superior information who would condescendingly explain the various pictures, pointing out with a long stick the phenomena most worthy of notice.[1] These caricatures proving highly successful, and being suppressed by order of government, they were repeated upon canvas on a larger scale, in still more conspicuous situations, as if in contempt of the royal authority, which sullied itself by compromise with Calvinism.[2] The pulpits, meanwhile, thundered denunciations on the one hand against the weak and wicked King, who worshipped idols, and who sacrificed the dearly-earned pittance of his subjects to feed the insolent pomp of his pampered favourites; and on the other, upon the arch-heretic, the arch-apostate, the Bearnese Huguenot, who, after the death of the reigning monarch, would have the effrontery to claim his throne, and to introduce into France the persecutions and the horrors under which unhappy England was already groaning.

The scarce-concealed instigator of these assaults upon the royal and upon the Huguenot faction was, of course, the Duke of Guise,—the man whose most signal achievement had been the Massacre of St. Bartholomew—all the preliminary details of that transaction having been arranged by his skill. So long as Charles IX. was living, the Balafré had created the confusion which was his element, by entertaining and fomenting the perpetual intrigues of Anjou and Alençon against their brother; while the altercations between them and the Queen-

[1] De Thou, ix., 269, 270, *seq.* [2] Ibid.

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Mother and the furious madman who then sat upon the throne, had been the cause of sufficient disorder and calamity for France. On the death of Charles IX. Guise had sought the intimacy of Henry of Navarre, that by his means he might frustrate the hopes of Alençon for the succession. During the early period of the Bearnese's residence at the French court the two had been inseparable, living together, going to the same festivals, tournaments, and masquerades, and even sleeping in the same bed. "My master," was ever Guise's address to Henry; "my gossip," the young King of Navarre's reply. But the crafty Bearnese had made use of the intimacy only to read the secrets of the Balafré's heart; and on Navarre's flight from the court, and his return to Huguenotism, Guise knew that he had been played upon by a subtler spirit than his own. The simulated affection was now changed into undisguised hatred. Moreover, by the death of Alençon, Navarre now stood next the throne, and Guise's plots became still more extensive and more open as his own ambition to usurp the crown on the death of the childless Henry III. became more fervid.[1]

Thus, by artfully inflaming the populace of Paris, and—through his organized bands of confederates—that of all the large towns of France, against the Huguenots and their chief, by appeals to the religious sentiment; and at the same time by stimulating the disgust and indignation of the tax-payers everywhere at the imposts and heavy burthens which the boundless extravagance of the court engendered, Guise paved the way for the advancement of the great League which he represented. The other two political divisions were ingeniously represented as mere insolent factions, while his own was the true national and patriotic party, by which alone the ancient religion and the cherished institutions of France could be preserved.[2]

And the great chief of this national patriotic party was not Henry of Guise, but the industrious old man who sat writing despatches in the depths of the Escorial. Spanish

1 Perefixe, 28, *seq.* 2 De Thou, Perefixe, *ubi sup.*

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counsels, Spanish promises, Spanish ducats—these were the real machinery by which the plots of Guise against the peace of France and of Europe were supported. Madam League was simply Philip II. Nothing was written, officially or unofficially, to the French government by the Spanish court that was not at the same time communicated to "Mucio"—as the Duke of Guise was denominated in the secret correspondence of Philip,—and Mucio was in Philip's pay, his confidential agent, spy, and confederate, long before the actual existence of the League was generally suspected.

The Queen-Mother, Catharine de' Medici, played into the Duke's hands. Throughout the whole period of her widowhood, having been accustomed to govern her sons, she had, in a certain sense, been used to govern the kingdom. By sowing dissensions among her own children, by inflaming party against party, by watching with care the oscillations of France—so that none of the great divisions should obtain preponderance—by alternately caressing and massacring the Huguenots, by cajoling or confronting Philip, by keeping, as she boasted, a spy in every family that possessed the annual income of two thousand livres, by making herself the head of an organized system of harlotry, by which the soldiers and politicians of France were inveigled, their secrets faithfully revealed to her by her well-disciplined maids of honour, by surrounding her unfortunate sons with temptation from earliest youth, and plunging them by cold calculation into deepest debauchery, that their enervated faculties might be ever forced to rely in political affairs on the maternal counsel, and to abandon the administration to the maternal will; such were the arts by which Catharine had maintained her influence, and a great country been governed for a generation—Machiavellian state-craft blended with the more simple wiles of a procuress.

Now that Alençon was dead, and Henry III. hopeless of issue, it was her determination that the children of her daughter, the Duchess of Lorraine, should succeed to the throne. The matter was discussed as if the throne were already vacant, and Guise and the Queen-Mother, if they

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agreed in nothing else, were both cordial in their detestation of Henry of Navarre. The Duke affected to support the schemes in favour of his relatives, the Princes of Lorraine, while he secretly informed the Spanish court that this policy was only a pretence. He was not likely, he said, to advance the interests of the younger branch of a house of which he was himself the chief, nor were their backs equal to the burthen. It was necessary to amuse the old queen, but he was profoundly of opinion that the only sovereign for France, upon the death of Henry, was Philip II. himself. This was the Duke's plan of arriving, by means of Spanish assistance, at the throne of France; and such was Henry le Balafré, chief of the League.[1]

And the other Henry, the Huguenot, the Béarnese, Henry of Bourbon, Henry of Navarre, the chieftain of the Gascon chivalry, the king errant, the hope and the darling of the oppressed Protestants in every land—of him it is scarce needful to say a single word. At his very name a figure seems to leap forth from the mist of three centuries, instinct with ruddy vigorous life. Such was the intense vitality of the Béarnese prince, that even now he seems more thoroughly alive and recognizable than half the actual personages who are fretting their hour upon the stage.

We see, at once, a man of moderate stature, light, sinewy, and strong; a face browned with continual exposure; small, mirthful, yet commanding blue eyes, glittering from beneath an arching brow, and prominent cheekbones; a long hawk's nose, almost resting upon a salient chin, a pendent moustache, and a thick, brown, curly beard, prematurely grizzled; we see the mien of frank authority and magnificent good humour, we hear the ready sallies of the shrewd Gascon mother-wit, we feel the electricity which flashes out of him, and sets all hearts around him on fire, when the trumpet sounds to battle. The headlong desperate charge, the snow-white plume waving where the fire is hottest, the large capacity for enjoyment of the man, rioting without affectation in the *certaminis gaudia*,

[1] De Thou, ix. 267.

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the insane gallop, after the combat, to lay its trophies at the feet of the Cynthia of the minute, and thus to forfeit its fruits; all are as familiar to us as if the seven distinct wars, the hundred pitched battles, the two hundred sieges, in which the Bearnese was personally present, had been occurrences of our own day.

He at least was both king and man, if the monarch who occupied the throne was neither. He was the man to prove, too, for the instruction of the patient letter-writer of the Escorial, that the crown of France was to be won with foot in stirrup and carbine in hand, rather than to be caught by the weaving and casting of the most intricate nets of diplomatic intrigue, though thoroughly weighted with Mexican gold.

The King of Navarre was now thirty-one years old; for the three Henrys were nearly of the same age. The first indications of his existence had been recognized amid the cannon and trumpets of a camp in Picardy, and his mother had sung a gay Bearnese song as he was coming into the world at Pau. Thus, said his grandfather, Henry of Navarre, thou shalt not bear to us a morose and sulky child. The good king, without a kingdom, taking the child, as soon as born, in the lappel of his dressing-gown, had brushed his infant lips with a clove of garlic, and moistened them with a drop of generous Gascon wine. Thus, said the grandfather again, shall the boy be both merry and bold. There was something mythologically prophetic in the incidents of his birth.

The best part of Navarre had been long since appropriated by Ferdinand of Aragon. In France there reigned a young and warlike sovereign with four healthy boys. But the new-born infant had inherited the lilies of France from St. Louis, and a later ancestor had added to the escutcheon the motto "Espoir." His grandfather believed that the boy was born to revenge upon Spain the wrongs of the House of Albret, and Henry's nature seemed ever pervaded with Robert of Clermont's device.

The same sensible grandfather, having different views on

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the subject of education from those manifested by Catharine de' Medici towards her children, had the boy taught to run about bare-headed and bare-footed, like a peasant, among the mountains and rocks of Bearn, till he became as rugged as a young bear, and as nimble as a kid. Black bread, and beef, and garlic, were his simple fare; and he was taught by his mother and his grandfather to hate lies and liars, and to read the Bible.

When he was fifteen, the third religious war broke out. Both his father and grandfather were dead. His mother, who had openly professed the reformed faith, since the death of her husband, who hated it, brought her boy to the camp at Rochelle, where he was received as the chief of the Huguenots. His culture was not extensive. He had learned to speak the truth, to ride, to shoot, to do with little sleep and less food. He could also construe a little Latin, and had read a few military treatises; but the mighty hours of an eventful life were now to take him by the hand, and to teach him much good and much evil, as they bore him onward. He now saw military treatises expounded practically by professors, like his uncle Condé, and Admiral Coligny, and Lewis Nassau, in such lecture-rooms as Laudun, and Jarnac, and Montcontour, and never was apter scholar.

The peace of Arnay-le-Duc succeeded, and then the fatal Bartholomew marriage with the Messalina of Valois. The faith taught in the mountains of Bearn was no buckler against the demand of "the mass or death," thundered at his breast by the lunatic Charles, as he pointed to thousands of massacred Huguenots. Henry yielded to such conclusive arguments, and became a Catholic. Four years of court-imprisonment succeeded, and the young King of Navarre, though proof to the artifices of his gossip Guise, was not adamant to the temptations spread for him by Catharine de' Medici. In the harem entertained for him in the Louvre many pitfalls entrapped him; and he became a stock-performer in the state comedies and tragedies of that plotting age.

A silken web of palace-politics, palace-diplomacy, palace-

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revolutions, enveloped him. Schemes and counter-schemes, stratagems and conspiracies, assassinations and poisonings; all the state-machinery which worked so exquisitely in fair ladies' chambers, to spread havoc and desolation over a kingdom, were displayed before his eyes. Now campaigning with one royal brother against Huguenots, now fighting with another on their side, now solicited by the Queen-Mother to attempt the life of her son,[1] now implored by Henry III. to assassinate his brother,[2] the Bearnese, as fresh antagonisms, affinities, combinations, were developed, detected, neutralized almost daily, became rapidly an adept in Medicean state-chemistry. Charles IX. in his grave, Henry III. on the throne, Alençon in the Huguenot camp—Henry at last made his escape. The brief war and peace of Monsieur succeeded, and the King of Navarre formally abjured the Catholic creed. The parties were now sharply defined. Guise mounted upon the League, Henry astride upon the Reformation, were prepared to do battle to the death. The temporary "war of the amorous" was followed by the peace of Fleix.

Four years of peace again; four fat years of wantonness and riot preceding fourteen hungry famine-stricken years of bloodiest civil war. The voluptuousness and infamy of the Louvre were almost paralleled in vice, if not in splendour, by the miniature court at Pau. Henry's Spartan grandfather would scarce have approved the courses of the youth, whose education he had commenced on so simple a scale. For Margaret of Valois, hating her husband, and living in most undisguised and promiscuous infidelity to him, had profited by her mother's lesssons. A seraglio of maids of honour ministered to Henry's pleasures, and were carefully instructed that the peace and war of the kingdom were playthings in their hands. While at Paris royalty was hopelessly sinking in a poisonous marsh, there was danger that even the hardy nature of the Bearnese would be mortally enervated by the atmosphere in which he lived.[3]

[1] Perefixe, 28.
[2] Ibid., 38, 39.
[3] 'Mémoires d'Agrippa d'Aubigné,' ed. 1854. Appendix, xvii. p. 237.

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The unhappy Henry III., baited by the Guises, worried by Alençon and his mother, implored the King of Navarre to return to Paris and the Catholic faith. M. de Ségur, chief of Navarre's council, who had been won over during a visit to the capital, where he had made the discovery that "Henry III. was an angel, and his ministers devils," came back to Pau, urging his master's acceptance of the royal invitation.[1] Henry wavered. Bold D'Aubigné, stanchest of Huguenots, and of his friends, next day privately showed Ségur a palace-window opening on a very steep precipice over the Bayse, and cheerfully assured him that he should be flung from it did he not instantly reverse his proceedings, and give his master different advice. If I am not able to do the deed myself, said D'Aubigné, here are a dozen more to help me. The chief of the council cast a glance behind him, saw a number of grim Puritan soldiers, with their hats plucked down upon their brows, looking very serious; so made his bow, and quite changed his line of conduct.[2]

At about the same time, Philip II. confidentially offered Henry of Navarre four hundred thousand crowns in hand, and twelve hundred thousand yearly, if he would consent to make war upon Henry III.[3] Mucio, or the Duke of Guise, being still in Philip's pay, the combination of Leaguers and Huguenots against the unfortunate Valois would, it was thought, be a good triangular contest.

But Henry—no longer the unsophisticated youth who had been used to run barefoot among the cliffs of Coarasse—was grown too crafty a politician to be entangled by Spanish or Medicean wiles. The Duke of Anjou was now dead. Of all the princes who had stood between him and the throne, there

[1] D'Aubigné, 'Memoires,' p. 67, 68.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "The Abp. of Colein told me that the Prince of Orange had acquainted him with a practice of the King of Spain's, which was an offer made to the King of Navarre of 400,000 Δ* in ready money, and a 100,000 Δ* monthly, if he would make wars with the French king—whereunto I answered, that I thought it done with a Spanish mind and cunning to draw the King of Navarre, as Sebastian of Portugal was, to his ruin and loss of life and kingdom, and by this means to destroy also the religion and churches in France," &c. (Herle to Queen Elizabeth, 22d July, 1584. S. P. Office MS.)

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was none remaining save the helpless, childless, superannuated youth, who was its present occupant. The King of Navarre was legitimate heir to the crown of France. "Espoir" was now in letters of light upon his shield, but he knew that his path to greatness led through manifold dangers, and that it was only at the head of his Huguenot chivalry that he could cut his way. He was the leader of the nobles of Gascony, and Dauphiny, and Guienne, in their mountain fastnesses, of the weavers, cutlers, and artizans, in their thriving manufacturing and trading towns. It was not Spanish gold, but carbines and cutlasses, bows and bills, which could bring him to the throne of his ancestors.

And thus he stood the chieftain of that great austere party of Huguenots, the men who went on their knees before the battle, beating their breasts with their iron gauntlets, and singing in full chorus a psalm of David, before smiting the Philistines hip and thigh.

Their chieftain, scarcely their representative—fit to lead his Puritans on the battle-field, was hardly a model for them elsewhere. Yet, though profligate in one respect, he was temperate in every other. In food, wine, and sleep, he was always moderate. Subtle and crafty in self-defence, he retained something of his old love of truth, of his hatred for liars. Hardly generous perhaps, he was a friend of justice, while economy in a wandering King, like himself, was a necessary virtue, of which France one day was to feel the beneficent action. Reckless and headlong in appearance, he was in truth the most careful of men. On the religious question, most cautious of all, he always left the door open behind him, disclaimed all bigotry of opinion, and earnestly implored the Papists to seek, not his destruction, but his instruction. Yet prudent as he was by nature in every other regard, he was all his life the slave of one woman or another, and it was by good luck rather than by sagacity that he did not repeatedly forfeit the fruits of his courage and conduct, in obedience to his master-passion.

Always open to conviction on the subject of his faith, he

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repudiated the appellation of heretic. A creed, he said, was not to be changed like a shirt, but only on due deliberation, and under special advice. In his secret heart he probably regarded the two religions as his chargers, and was ready to mount alternately the one or the other, as each seemed the more likely to bear him safely in the battle. The Bearnese was no Puritan, but he was most true to himself and to his own advancement. His highest principle of action was to reach his goal, and to that principle he was ever loyal. Feeling, too, that it was the interest of France that he should succeed, he was even inspired—compared with others on the stage—by an almost lofty patriotism.

Amiable by nature and by habit, he had preserved the most unimpaired good-humour throughout the horrible years which succeeded St. Bartholomew, during which he carried his life in his hand, and learned not to wear his heart upon his sleeve. Without gratitude, without resentment, without fear, without remorse, entirely arbitrary, yet with the capacity to use all men's judgments; without convictions, save in regard to his dynastic interests, he possessed all the qualities necessary to success. He knew how to use his enemies. He knew how to use his friends, to abuse them, and to throw them away. He refused to assassinate Francis Alençon at the bidding of Henry III., but he attempted to procure the murder of the truest of his own friends, one of the noblest characters of the age—whose breast showed twelve scars received in his service—Agrippa D'Aubigné, because the honest soldier had refused to become his pimp—a service the King had implored upon his knees.[1]

Beneath the mask of perpetual careless good-humour, lurked the keenest eye, a subtle, restless, widely combining brain, and an iron will. Native sagacity had been tempered into consummate elasticity by the fiery atmosphere in which feebler natures had been dissolved. His wit was as flashing and as quickly unsheathed as his sword. Desperate, apparently reckless temerity on the battle-field was deliberately indulged

[1] D'Aubigné, 'Memoires,' pp. 38-44.

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in, that the world might be brought to recognise a hero and chieftain in a King. The do-nothings of the Merovingian line had been succeeded by the Pepins; to the effete Carlovingians had come a Capet; to the impotent Valois should come a worthier descendant of St. Louis. This was shrewd Gascon calculation, aided by constitutional fearlessness. When despatch-writing, invisible Philips, star-gazing Rudolphs, and petticoated Henrys, sat upon the thrones of Europe, it was wholesome to show the world that there was a King left who could move about in the bustle and business of the age, and could charge as well as most soldiers at the head of his cavalry; that there was one more sovereign fit to reign over men, besides the glorious Virgin who governed England.

Thus courageous, crafty, far-seeing, consistent, untiring, imperturbable, he was born to command, and had a right to reign. He had need of the throne, and the throne had still more need of him.

This then was the third Henry, representative of the third side of the triangle, the reformers of the kingdom.

And before this bubbling cauldron of France, where intrigues, foreign and domestic, conflicting ambitions, stratagems, and hopes, were whirling in never-ceasing tumult, was it strange if the plain Netherland envoys should stand somewhat aghast?

Yet it was necessary that they should ponder well the aspect of affairs; for all their hopes, the very existence of themselves and of their religion, depended upon the organization which should come of this chaos.

It must be remembered, however, that those statesmen—even the wisest or the best-informed of them—could not take so correct a view of France and its politics as it is possible for us, after the lapse of three centuries, to do. The interior leagues, subterranean schemes, conflicting factions, could only be guessed at; nor could the immediate future be predicted, even by such far-seeing politicians as William of Orange, at a distance, or Henry of Navarre, upon the spot.

It was obvious to the Netherlanders that France, although

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torn by faction, was a great and powerful realm. There had now been, with the brief exception of the lovers' war in 1580, a religious peace of eight years' duration. The Huguenots had enjoyed tranquil exercise of their worship during that period, and they expressed perfect confidence in the good faith of the King. That the cities were inordinately taxed to supply the luxury of the court could hardly be unknown to the Netherlanders. Nevertheless they knew that the kingdom was the richest and most populous of Christendom, after that of Spain. Its capital, already called by contemporaries the "compendium of the world," was described by travellers as "stupendous in extent and miraculous for its numbers." It was even said to contain eight hundred thousand souls, and although its actual population did not probably exceed three hundred and twenty thousand, yet this was more than double the number of London's inhabitants, and thrice as many as Antwerp could then boast, now that a great proportion of its foreign denizens had been scared away. Paris was at least by one hundred thousand more populous than any city of Europe, except perhaps the remote and barbarous Moscow, while the secondary cities of France, Rouen in the north, Lyons in the centre, and Marseilles in the south, almost equalled in size, business, wealth, and numbers, the capitals of other countries. In the whole kingdom were probably ten or twelve millions of inhabitants, nearly as many as in Spain, without her colonies, and perhaps three times the number that dwelt in England.

In a military point of view, too, the alliance of France was most valuable to the contiguous Netherlands. A few regiments of French troops, under the command of one of their experienced Marshals, could block up the Spaniards in the Walloon Provinces, effectually stop their operations against Ghent, Antwerp, and the other great cities of Flanders and Brabant, and, with the combined action of the United Provinces on the north, so surround and cripple the forces of Parma, as to reduce the power of Philip, after a few vigorous and well-concerted blows, to an absolute nullity in the Low

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Countries. As this result was of as vital importance to the real interests of France and of Europe, whether Protestant or Catholic, as it was to the Provinces, and as the French government had privately manifested a strong desire to oppose the progress of Spain towards universal empire, it was not surprising that the States General, not feeling capable of standing alone, should make their application to France. This they had done with the knowledge and concurrence of the English government. What lay upon the surface the Netherland statesmen saw and pondered well. What lurked beneath, they surmised as shrewdly as they could, but it was impossible, with plummet and fathom-line ever in hand, to sound the way with perfect accuracy, where the quicksands were ever shifting, and the depth or shallowness of the course perpetually varying. It was not easy to discover the intentions of a government which did not know its own intentions, and whose changing policy was controlled by so many hidden currents.

Moreover, as already indicated, the envoys and those whom they represented had not the same means of arriving at a result as are granted to us. Thanks to the liberality of many modern governments of Europe, the archives where the state-secrets of the buried centuries have so long mouldered, are now open to the student of history. To him who has patience and industry many mysteries are thus revealed, which no political sagacity or critical acumen could have divined. He leans over the shoulder of Philip the Second at his writing-table, as the King spells patiently out, with cipher-key in hand, the most concealed hieroglyphics of Parma or Guise or Mendoza. He reads the secret thoughts of "Fabius,"[1] as that cunctative Roman scrawls his marginal apostilles on each despatch; he pries into all the stratagems of Camillus, Hortensius, Mucius, Julius, Tullius, and the rest of those ancient heroes who lent their names to the diplomatic masqueraders of the 16th century; he enters the cabinet of the

[1] The name usually assigned to Philip himself in the Paris-Simancas Correspondence.

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deeply-pondering Burghley, and takes from the most private drawer the memoranda which record that minister's unutterable doubtings; he pulls from the dressing-gown folds of the stealthy, softly-gliding Walsingham the last secret which he has picked from the Emperor's pigeon-holes, or the Pope's pocket, and which, not Hatton, nor Buckhurst, nor Leicester, nor the Lord Treasurer, is to see; nobody but Elizabeth herself; he sits invisible at the most secret councils of the Nassaus and Barneveldt and Buys, or pores with Farnese over coming victories, and vast schemes of universal conquest; he reads the latest bit of scandal, the minutest characteristic of king or minister, chronicled by the gossiping Venetians for the edification of the Forty; and, after all this prying and eavesdropping, having seen the cross-purposes, the bribings, the windings, the fencings in the dark, he is not surprised, if those who were systematically deceived did not always arrive at correct conclusions.

Noel de Caron, Seigneur de Schoneval, had been agent of the States at the French court at the time of the death of the Duke of Anjou. Upon the occurrence of that event, La Mouillerie and Asseliers were deputed by the Provinces to King Henry III., in order to offer him the sovereignty, which they had intended to confer upon his brother.[1] Meantime that brother, just before his death, and with the privity of Henry, had been negotiating for a marriage with the younger daughter of Philip II.—an arrangement somewhat incompatible with his contemporaneous scheme to assume the sovereignty of Philip's revolted Provinces. An attempt had been made at the same time to conciliate the Duke of Savoy, and invite him to the French court; but the Duc de Joyeuse, then on his return from Turin, was bringing the news, not only that the match with Anjou was not favored—which, as Anjou was dead, was of no great consequence—but that the Duke of Savoy was himself to espouse the Infanta, and was therefore

1 'Verhael van 't gene de heeren de la Mouillerie ende van Asseliers hadden gedaan ende gebesoigneert, midtsgaders verstaen in henluyden reise naer Vrankryck aen den Coninck racckende den last hen gegeven op mijne heeren de Generale Staten.' (Royal Archives at the Hague, MS.)

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compelled to decline the invitation to Paris, for fear of offending his father-in-law.[1] Other matters were in progress, to be afterwards indicated, very much interfering with the negotiations of the Netherland envoys.

When La Mouillerie and Asseliers arrived at Rouen, on their road from Dieppe to Paris, they received a peremptory order from the Queen-Mother to proceed no farther. This prohibition was brought by an unofficial personage, and was delivered, not to them, but to Des Pruneaux, French envoy to the States General, who had accompanied the envoys to France.[2]

After three weeks' time, during which they "kept themselves continually concealed in Rouen," there arrived in that city a young nephew of Secretary Brulart, who brought letters empowering him to hear what they had in charge for the King. The envoys, not much flattered by such cavalier treatment on the part of him to whom they were offering a crown, determined to digest the affront as they best might, and, to save time, opened the whole business to this subordinate stripling. He received from them accordingly an ample memoir to be laid before his Majesty, and departed by the post the same night. Then they waited ten days longer, concealed as if they had been thieves or spies, rather than the representatives of a friendly power, on a more than friendly errand.

At last, on the 24th July, after the deputies had been thus shut up a whole month, Secretary Brulart himself arrived from Fontainebleau.[4]

24th July, 1584.

He stated that the King sent his royal thanks to the States for the offer which they had made him, and to the deputies in particular for taking the trouble of so long a journey; but

[1] Stafford to Walsingham, 29th Aug., 1584, in Murdin, ii. 419, 420.

[2] 'Lettre des Deputés en France au Prince d'Oranges du 16 Juillet, 1584,' (Hague Archives MS.) This letter to William the Silent was written six days after his death.

[3] MS. Letter in Hague Archives, before cited.

[4] 'Rapport faict par Noel de Caron, aiant esté deputé de la part de Messeigneurs les Etats generaux vers la Majesté du Roy de France, en l'assemblée des dicts Estats à Delft, le 5 Aoûst, 1584.' (Hague Archives MS.)

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that he did not find his realm in condition to undertake a foreign war so inopportunely. In every other regard, his Majesty offered the States "all possible favours and pleasures."[1]

Certainly, after having been thus kept in prison for a month, the ambassadors had small cause to be contented with this very cold communication. To be forbidden the royal presence, and to be turned out of the country without even an official and accredited answer to a communication in which they had offered the sovereignty of their fatherland, was not flattering to their dignity. "We little thought," said they to Brulart, after a brief consultation among themselves, "to receive such a reply as this. It displeases us infinitely that his Majesty will not do us the honour to grant us an audience. We must take the liberty of saying, that 'tis treating the States, our masters, with too much contempt. Who ever heard before of refusing audience to public personages? Kings often grant audience to mere letter-carriers. Even the King of Spain never refused a hearing to the deputies from the Netherlands when they came to Spain to complain of his own government. The States General have sent envoys to many other kings and princes, and they have instantly granted audience in every case. His Majesty, too, has been very ill-informed of the contracts which we formerly made with the Duke of Anjou, and therefore a personal interview is the more necessary."[2] As the envoys were obstinate on the point of Paris, Brulart said "that the King, although he should himself be at Lyons, would not prevent any one from going to the capital on his own private affairs; but would unquestionably take it very ill if they should visit that city in a public manner, and as deputies."[3]

Des Pruneaux professed himself "very grievous at this result, and desirous of a hundred deaths in consequence."

They stated that they should be ready within a month to

[1] Report of Noel de Caron, MS. before cited.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Dont le dict Sr. des Epruneaux estoit en son particulier fort dolent, et se soubhaita cent fois estre mort," &c. (MS. Report before cited.)

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bring an army of 3,000 horse and 13,000 foot into the field for the relief of Ghent, besides their military operations against Zutphen; and that the enemy had recently been ignominiously defeated in his attack upon Fort Lillo, and had lost 2,000 of his best soldiers.[1]

Here were encouraging facts; and it certainly was worth the while of the French sovereign to pause a moment before rejecting without a hearing, the offer of such powerful and conveniently-situated provinces.

Des Pruneaux, a man of probity and earnestness, but perhaps of insufficient ability to deal with such grave matters as now fell almost entirely upon his shoulders,[2] soon afterwards obtained audience of the King. Being most sincerely in favour of the annexation of the Netherlands to France, and feeling that now or never was the opportunity of bringing it about, he persuaded the King to send him back to the Provinces, in order to continue the negotiation directly with the States General. The timidity and procrastination of the court could be overcome no further.

The two Dutch envoys, who had stolen secretly to Paris, were indulged in a most barren and unmeaning interview with the Queen-Mother. Before their departure from France, however, they had the advantage of much conversation with leading members of the royal council, of the parliaments of Paris and Rouen, and also with various persons professing the reformed religion. They endeavoured thus to inform themselves, as well as they could, why the King made so much difficulty in accepting their propositions, and whether, and by what means, his Majesty could be induced to make war in their behalf upon the King of Spain.[3]

They were informed that, *should Holland and Zeeland unite with the rest of the Netherlands*, the King "without any doubt would undertake the cause most earnestly." His councillors, also—even those who had been most active in dissuading his Majesty from such a policy—would then be

[1] MS. Letter to the States-General before cited.

[2] De Thou, ix. 251.

[3] MS. Verhael before cited.

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unanimous in supporting the annexation of the Provinces and the war with Spain. In such a contingency, with the potent assistance of Holland and Zeeland, the King would have little difficulty, within a very short time, in chasing every single Spaniard out of the Netherlands. To further this end, many leading personages in France avowed to the envoys their determination "to venture their lives and their fortunes, and to use all the influence which they possessed at court."

The same persons expressed their conviction that the King, once satisfied by the Provinces as to conditions and reasons, would cheerfully go into the war, without being deterred by any apprehension as to the power of Spain. It was, however, fitting that each Province should chaffer as little as possible about details, but should give his Majesty every reasonable advantage. They should remember that they were dealing with "a great, powerful monarch, who was putting his realm in jeopardy, and not with a Duke of Anjou, who had every thing to gain and nothing to lose."[1]

All the Huguenots, with whom the envoys conversed, were excessively sanguine. Could the King be once brought they said, to promise the Netherlands his protection, there was not the least fear but that he would keep his word. He would use all the means within his power; "yea, he would take the crown from his head," rather than turn back. Although reluctant to commence a war with so powerful a sovereign, having once promised his help, he would keep his pledge to the utmost, "*for he was a King of his word*," and had never broken and would never break his faith with those of the reformed religion.[2]

[1] Mouillerie and Asseliers, MS. before cited.

[2] "Dus Verclarende oick bezunder die van de Religie, die wy gesproken hebben, dat zoo verre wy consten den Coninck zoo verre bringen dat hy ons beloofde te beschermen, wy niet en dorfden vreesen oft hy en zoudt ons houden ende zoude gebruycken alle zyne middelen, jae die crone van zynen hoofde, seggende dat hoe wel hy zeer qualycken es, om totter oirlooge te brengen-niet zonder oirzaecke, mids het es tegen eenen alzulcken machtigen Prince, dat hebbende belooft ons te helpen, dat hy nyet laten en zoude tzelfde int neerste te houden, want hy es (zoo zy ons verclaerden) eenen Coninck van zynen woorde zyn belooste houdende, ende zelver die van der religie seyden ons, dat hy hen nemmermeer en hadde gefailleert van

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Thus spoke the leading Huguenots of France, in confidential communication with the Netherland envoys, not many months before the famous edict of extermination, published at Nemours.

At that moment the reformers were full of confidence; not foreseeing the long procession of battles and sieges which was soon to sweep through the land. Notwithstanding the urgency of the Papists for their extirpation, they extolled loudly the liberty of religious worship which Calvinists, as well as Catholics, were enjoying in France, and pointed to the fact that the adherents of both religions were well received at court, and that they shared equally in offices of trust and dignity throughout the kingdom.[1]

The Netherland envoys themselves bore testimony to the undisturbed tranquillity and harmony in which the professors of both religions were living and worshipping side by side "without reproach or quarrel" in all the great cities which they had visited. They expressed the conviction that the same toleration would be extended to all the Provinces when under French dominion; and, so far as their ancient constitutions and privileges were concerned, they were assured that the King of France would respect and maintain them with as much fidelity as the States could possibly desire.[2]

Des Pruneaux, accompanied by the two States' envoys, departed forthwith for the Netherlands. On the 24th August, 24th Aug., 1584, he delivered a discourse before the States 1584. General, in which he disclosed, in very general terms, the expectations of Henry III., and intimated very clearly that the different Provinces were to lose no time in making an unconditional offer to that monarch. With regard to Holland and Zeeland he observed that he was provided with a special commission to those Estates.[3]

It was not long before one Province after the other came

tgene hy hen belooft hadde." (Mouillerie and Asseliers, Verhael, &c. MS. before cited.)

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Wagenaar, viii. 31. *seq.*

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to the conclusion to offer the sovereignty to the King without written conditions, but with a general understanding that their religious freedom and their ancient constitutions were to be sacredly respected. Meantime, Des Pruneaux made his appearance in Holland and Zeeland, and declared the King's intentions of espousing the cause of the States, and of accepting the sovereignty of all the Provinces. He distinctly observed, however, that it was as sovereign, not as protector, that his Majesty must be recognised in Holland and Zeeland as well as in the rest of the country.

Upon this grave question there was much debate and much difference of opinion. Holland and Zeeland had never contemplated the possibility of accepting any foreign sovereignty, and the opponents of the present scheme were loud and angry, but very reasonable in their remarks.[1]

The French, they said, were no respecters of privileges nor of persons. The Duke of Anjou had deceived William of Orange and betrayed the Provinces. Could they hope to see farther than that wisest and most experienced prince? Had not the stout hearts of the Antwerp burghers proved a stronger defence to Brabant liberties than the "joyous entry" on the dread day of the "French fury," it would have fared ill then and for ever with the cause of freedom and religion in the Netherlands. The King of France was a Papist, a Jesuit. He was incapable of keeping his pledges. Should they make the arrangement now proposed and confer the sovereignty upon him, he would forthwith make peace with Spain, and transfer the Provinces back to that crown in exchange for the duchy of Milan, which France had ever coveted. The Netherlands, after a quarter of a century of fighting in defence of their hearths and altars, would find themselves handed over again, bound and fettered, to the tender mercies of the Spanish Inquisition.[2]

The Kings of France and of Spain always acted in concert, for religion was the most potent of bonds. Witness the

[1] Wagenaar, Bor, xix. 462.

[2] 'Vertoog van Gouda tegen den handel met Frankryk' apud Bor, II. 489 *seq.*; Wagenaar, viii. 41, *seq.*

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sacrifice of thousands of French soldiers to Alva by their own sovereign at Mons, witness the fate of Genlis, witness the bloody night of St. Bartholomew, witness the Antwerp fury. Men cited and relied upon the advice of William of Orange as to this negociation with France. But Orange never dreamed of going so far as now proposed. He was ever careful to keep the Provinces of Holland and Zeeland safe from every foreign master. That spot was to be holy ground. Not out of personal ambition. God forbid that they should accuse his memory of any such impurity, but because he wished one safe refuge for the spirit of freedom.

Many years long they had held out by land and sea against the Spaniards, and should they now, because this Des Pruneaux shrugged his shoulders, be so alarmed as to open the door to the same Spaniard wearing the disguise of a Frenchman?[1]

Prince Maurice also made a brief representation to the States' Assembly of Holland, in which, without distinctly opposing the negociation with France, he warned them not to proceed too hastily with so grave a matter. He reminded them how far they had gone in the presentation of the sovereignty to his late father, and requested them, in their dealings with France, not to forget his interests and those of his family. He reminded them of the position of that family, overladen with debt contracted in their service alone. He concluded by offering most affectionately his service in any way in which he, young and inexperienced as he knew himself to be, might be thought useful; as he was long since resolved to devote his life to the welfare of his country.[2]

These passionate appeals were answered with equal vehemence by those who had made up their minds to try the chances of the French sovereignty. Des Pruneaux, meanwhile, was travelling from province to province, and from city to city, using the arguments which have already been sufficiently

[1] "En zou ons nu 't gerugt van zyne aankomst, en dat Pruneaux de schouders optrok, dermaate verbaazen, dat wy hem zelv' als een Franschman vermond, gingen inhaalen?" (Ibid.)

[2] Bor. II. (xix.) 488, *seq.*; Wagenaar, viii. 39, 40.

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indicated, and urging a speedy compliance with the French King's propositions. At the same time, in accordance with his instructions, he was very cautious to confine himself to generalities, and to avoid hampering his royal master with the restrictions which had proved so irksome to the Duke of Anjou.

"The States General demanded a copy of my speech," he wrote the day after that harangue had been delivered, "but I only gave them a brief outline; extending myself as little as I possibly could, according to the intention and command of your Majesty. When I got here, I found them without hope of our assistance, and terribly agitated by the partizans of Spain. There was some danger of their going over in a panic to the enemy. They are now much changed again, and the Spanish partizans are beginning to lose their tongues. I invite them, if they intend to address your Majesty, to proceed as they ought towards a veritably grand monarch, without hunting up any of their old quibbles, or reservations of provinces, or any thing else which could inspire suspicion. I have sent into Gelderland and Friesland, for I find I must stay here in Holland and Zeeland myself. These two provinces are the gates and ramparts through which we must enter. 'Tis, in my opinion, what could be called superb, to command all the sea, thus subject to the crown of France. And France, too, with assistance of this country, will command the land as well. They are much astonished here, however, that I communicate nothing of the intention of your Majesty. They say that if your Majesty does not accept this offer of their country, your Majesty puts the rope around their necks." [1]

25th Aug., 1584.

The French envoy was more and more struck with the brilliancy of the prize offered to his master. "If the King gets these Provinces," said he to Catharine, "'t will be the most splendid inheritance which Prince has ever conquered." [2]

In a very few weeks the assiduity of the envoy and of the

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c., i. 1-3.

[2] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' i 4.

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French party was successful. All the other provinces had very soon repeated the offer which they had previously made through Asseliers and La Mouillerie. By the beginning of October the opposition of Holland was vanquished. The estates of that Province—three cities excepted, however—determined "to request England and France to assume a joint protectorate over the Netherlands. In case the King of France should refuse this proposition, they were then ready to receive him as prince and master, with knowledge and consent of the Queen of England, and on such conditions as the United States should approve." [1]

Immediately afterwards, the General Assembly of all the States determined to offer the sovereignty to King Henry *on conditions to be afterwards settled.*" [2]

Des Pruneaux, thus triumphant, received a gold chain of the value of two thousand florins, and departed before the end of October for France.[3]

The departure of the solemn embassy to that country, for the purpose of offering the sovereignty to the King, was delayed till the beginning of January. Meantime it is necessary to cast a glance at the position of England in relation to these important transactions.

[1] Wagenaar, viii. 49.
[2] Ibid.; Bor, II. 495, Hoofd, xxi. 945.
[3] Wagenaar, viii. 51; 'Resol. Holl.,' 24th Oct., 1584, bl. 651.

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CHAPTER III.

Policy of England—Schemes of the Pretender of Portugal—Hesitation of the French Court—Secret Wishes of France—Contradictory Views as to the Opinions of Netherlanders—Their Love for England and Elizabeth—Prominent Statesmen of the Provinces—Roger Williams the Welshman—Views of Walsingham, Burghley, and the Queen—An Embassy to Holland decided upon—Davison at the Hague—Cautious and Secret Measures of Burghley—Consequent Dissatisfaction of Walsingham—English and Dutch Suspicion of France—Increasing Affection of Holland for England.

THE policy of England towards the Provinces had been somewhat hesitating, but it had not been disloyal. It was almost inevitable that there should be timidity in the councils of Elizabeth, when so grave a question as that of confronting the vast power of Spain was forcing itself day by day more distinctly upon the consideration of herself and her statesmen. It was very clear, now that Orange was dead, that some new and decided step would be taken. Elizabeth was in favour of combined action by the French and English governments, in behalf of the Netherlands—a joint protectorate of the Provinces, until such time as adequate concessions on the religious question could be obtained from Spain. She was unwilling to plunge into the peril and expense of a war with the strongest power in the world. She disliked the necessity under which she should be placed of making repeated applications to her parliament, and of thus fostering the political importance of the Commons; she was reluctant to encourage rebellious subjects in another land, however just the cause of their revolt. She felt herself vulnerable in Ireland and on the Scottish border. Nevertheless, the Spanish power was becoming so preponderant, that if the Netherlands were conquered, she could never feel a moment's security within her own territory. If the Provinces were annexed to France, on

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the other hand, she could not contemplate with complacency the increased power thus placed in the hands of the treacherous and jesuitical house of Valois.

The path of the Queen was thickly strewed with peril: her advisers were shrewd, far-seeing, patriotic, but some of them were perhaps over cautious. The time had, however, arrived when the danger was to be faced, if the whole balance of power in Europe were not to come to an end, and weak states, like England and the Netherlands, to submit to the tyranny of an overwhelming absolutism. The instinct of the English sovereign, of English statesmen, of the English nation, taught them that the cause of the Netherlands was their own. Nevertheless, they were inclined to look on yet a little longer, although the part of spectator had become an impossible one. The policy of the English government was not treacherous, although it was timid. That of the French court was both the one and the other, and it would have been better both for England and the Provinces, had they more justly appreciated the character of Catharine de' Medici and her son.

The first covert negotiations between Henry and the States had caused much anxiety among the foreign envoys in France. Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who had recently returned from Spain after his compulsory retreat from his post of English ambassador, was now established in Paris, as representative of Philip. He succeeded Tassis—a Netherlander by birth, and one of the ablest diplomatists in the Spanish service—and his house soon became the focus of intrigue against the government to which he was accredited—the very head-quarters of the League. His salary was large, his way of living magnificent, his insolence intolerable.

"Tassis is gone to the Netherlands," wrote envoy Busbecq to the Emperor, "and thence is to proceed to Spain. Don Bernardino has arrived in his place. If it be the duty of a good ambassador to expend largely, it would be difficult to find a better one than he; for they say 'tis his intention to spend sixteen thousand dollars yearly in his embassy. I

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would that all things were in correspondence, and that he were not in other respects so inferior to Tassis."[1]

It is, however, very certain that Mendoza was not only a brave soldier, but a man of very considerable capacity in civil affairs, although his inordinate arrogance interfered most seriously with his skill as a negotiator. He was, of course, watching with much fierceness the progress of these underhand proceedings between the French court and the rebellious subjects of his master, and using threats and expostulations in great profusion. "Mucio," too, the great stipendiary of Philip, was becoming daily more dangerous, and the adherents of the League were multiplying with great celerity.

The pretender of Portugal, Don Antonio, prior of Crato, was also in Paris; and it was the policy of both the French and the English governments to protect his person, and to make use of him as a rod over the head of Philip. Having escaped, after the most severe sufferings, in the mountains of Spain, where he had been tracked like a wild beast, with a price of thirty thousand crowns placed upon his head, he was now most anxious to stir the governments of Europe into espousing his cause, and into attacking Spain through the recently acquired kingdom of Portugal. Meantime, he was very desirous of some active employment, to keep himself from starving, and conceived the notion, that it would be an excellent thing for the Netherlands and himself, were he to make good to them the loss of William the Silent.

"Don Antonio," wrote Stafford, "made a motion to me yesterday, to move her Majesty, that now upon the Prince of Orange's death, as it is a necessary thing for them to have a governor and head, and him to be at her Majesty's devotion, if her Majesty would be at the means to work it for him, she should be assured nobody should be more faithfully tied in devotion to her than he. Truly you would pity the poor man's case, who is almost next door to starving in effect."[2]

[1] Busbecqui. 'Epist. ad Rud.' ii. p. 132.
[2] Stafford to Walsingham, Murdin ii. 412-415.

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A starving condition being, however, not the only requisite in a governor and head to replace the Prince of Orange, nothing came of this motion. Don Antonio remained in Paris, in a pitiable plight, and very much environed by dangers; for the Duke of Guise and his brother had undertaken to deliver him into the hands of Philip the Second, or those of his ministers, before the feast of St. John of the coming year. Fifty thousand dollars were to be the reward of this piece of work, combined with other services; "and the sooner they set about it the better," said Philip, writing a few months later, "for the longer they delay it, the less easy will they find it."[1]

The money was never earned, however, and meantime Don Antonio made himself as useful as he could, in picking up information for Sir Edward Stafford and the other opponents of Spanish policy in Paris.

The English envoy was much embarrassed by the position of affairs. He felt sure that the French monarch would never dare to enter the lists against the king of Spain, yet he was accurately informed of the secret negotiations with the Netherlands, while in the dark as to the ultimate intentions of his own government.

"I was never set to school so much," he wrote to Walsingham (27th July, 1584), "as I have been to decipher the cause of the deputies of the Low Countries coming hither, the offers that they made the King here, and the King's manner of dealing with them.[2]

He expressed great jealousy at the mystery which enveloped the whole transaction; and much annoyance with Noel de Caron, who "kept very secret, and was angry at the motion," when he endeavoured to discover the business in which they were engaged. Yet he had the magnanimity to request Walsingham not to mention the fact to the Queen, lest she should be thereby prejudiced against the States.

"For my part," said he, "I would be glad in any thing to

[1] Philip II. to J. B. Tassis, 15 and 28 March, 1585. (Archivo general de Simancas. Negociado de Estado Flandes. MS.)

[2] Murdin *ubi supra*.

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further them, rather than to hinder them—though they do not deserve it—yet for the good the helping them at this time may bring ourselves."[1]

Meantime, the deputies went away from France, and the King went to Lyons, where he had hoped to meet both the Duke of Savoy and the King of Navarre. But Joyeuse, who had been received at Chambery with "great triumphs and tourneys," brought back only a broken wrist, without bringing the Duke of Savoy; that potentate sending word that the "King of Spain had done him the honour to give him his daughter, and that it was not fit for him to do any thing that might bring jealousy."[2]

Henry of Navarre also, as we have seen, declined the invitation sent him, M. de Ségur not feeling disposed for the sudden flight out of window suggested by Agrippa D' Aubigné; so that, on the whole, the King and his mother, with all the court, returned from Lyons in marvellous ill humour.

"The King storms greatly," said Stafford, "and is in a great dump."[3] It was less practicable than ever to discover the intentions of the government; for although it was now very certain that active exertions were making by Des Pruneaux in the Provinces, it was not believed by the most sagacious that a serious resolution against Spain had been taken in France. There was even a talk of a double matrimonial alliance, at that very moment, between the two courts.

"It is for certain here said," wrote Stafford, "that the King of Spain doth presently marry the dowager of France, and 'tis thought that if the King of Spain marry, he will not live a year. Whensoever the marriage be," added the envoy, "I would to God the effect were true, for if it be not by some such handy work of God, I am afraid things will not go so well as I could wish."[4]

There was a lull on the surface of affairs, and it was not easy to sound the depths of unseen combinations and intrigues.

[1] Murdin, *ubi supra*. [2] Murdin, ii. 419, 420. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid

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There was also considerable delay in the appointment and the arrival of the new deputies from the Netherlands; and Stafford was as doubtful as ever as to the intentions of his own government.

"They look daily here for the States," he wrote to Walsingham (29th Dec. 1584), "and I pray that I may hear from you as soon as you may, what course I shall take when they be here, either hot or cold or lukewarm in the matter, and in what sort I shall behave myself. Some badly affected have gone about to put into the King's head, that they never meant to offer the sovereignty, which, though the King be not thoroughly persuaded of, yet so much is won by this means that the King *hearkeneth* to *see* the end, and then to believe as he seeth cause, and in the meantime to speak no more of any such matter than if it had never been moved."[1]

While his Majesty was thus hearkening in order to see more, according to Sir Edward's somewhat Hibernian mode of expressing himself, and keeping silent that he might see the better, it was more difficult than ever for the envoy to know what course to pursue. Some persons went so far as to suggest that the whole negotiation was a mere phantasmagoria devised by Queen Elizabeth—her purpose being to breed a quarrel between Henry and Philip for her own benefit; and "then, seeing them together by the ears, as her accustomed manner was, to let them go alone, and sit still to look on."[2]

The King did not appear to be much affected by these insinuations against Elizabeth; but the doubt and the delay were very harrassing. "I would to God," wrote the English envoy, "that if the States mean to do anything here with the King, and if her Majesty and the council think it fit, they would delay no time, but go roundly either to an agreement or to a breach with the King. Otherwise, as the matter now sleepeth, so it will die, for the King must be taken in his humour when he begins to nibble at any bait, for else he will come away, and never bite a full bite while he liveth."[3]

There is no doubt that the bait, at which Henry nibbled

[1] Murdin, ii. 431. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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with much avidity, was the maritime part of the Netherlands. Holland and Zeeland in the possession of either England or Spain, was a perpetual inconvenience to France. The King, or rather the Queen-Mother and her advisers—for Henry himself hardly indulged in any profound reflections on state-affairs,—desired and had made a *sine qua non* of those Provinces. It had been the French policy, from the beginning, to delay matters, in order to make the States feel the peril of their position to the full.

"The King, differing and temporising," wrote Herle to the Queen, "would have them fall into that necessity and danger, as that they should offer unto him simply the possession of all their estates. Otherwise, they were to see, as in a glass, their evident and hasty ruin."[1]

Even before the death of Orange, Henry had been determined, if possible, to obtain possession of the island of Walcheren, which controlled the whole country. "To give him that," said Herle, "would be to turn the hot end of the poker towards themselves, and put the cold part in the King's hand.[2] He had accordingly made a secret offer to William of Orange, through the Princess, of two millions of livres in ready money, or, if he preferred it, one hundred thousand livres yearly of perpetual inheritance, if he would secure to him the island of Walcheren. In that case he promised to declare war upon the King of Spain, to confirm to the States their privileges, and to guarantee to the Prince the earldoms of Holland and Zeeland, with all his other lands and titles."[3]

[1] Herle to Queen Elizabeth, MS. before cited.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "The French king's inward intention being discovered in some manner to them, and his faith holden suspected, Paul Buys at Delft to this effect willed me under secrecy and assurance to say unto your Majesty from him, that the said French King had two months since sounded the Prince of Orange by the Princess his wife, that in case he could be content to put into his hands the island of Walcheren, the said King would immediately declare Spain his enemy, confirm to the States their privileges, and unto the Prince of Orange the earldoms of Holland and Zeeland, with all his other lands and titles, and give him over and above 100,000Δ* yearly of perpetual inheritance, well assured to him and his, where he would choose the same; or, if he thought better, he should stow in ready money 2,000,000Δ* to behave at his pleasure.

"But, saith Buys (his scope being once seen), he shall never be trusted

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It is superfluous to say that such offers were only regarded by the Prince as an affront. It was, however, so necessary, in his opinion, to maintain the cause of the reformed churches in France, and to keep up the antagonism between that country and Spain, that the French policy was not abandoned, although the court was always held in suspicion.

But on the death of William, there was a strong reaction against France and in favour of England. Paul Buys, one of the ablest statesmen of the Netherlands, Advocate of Holland, and a confidential friend of William the Silent up to the time of his death, now became the leader of the English party, and employed his most strenuous efforts against the French treaty—having "seen the scope of that court."[1]

With regard to the other leading personages, there was a strong inclination in favour of Queen Elizabeth, whose commanding character inspired great respect. At the same time warmer sentiments of adhesion seem to have been expressed towards the French court, by the same individuals, than the mere language of compliment justified.

Thus, the widowed Princess of Orange was described by Des Pruneaux to his sovereign, as "very desolate, but nevertheless doing all in her power to advance his interests; the Count Maurice, of gentle hopes, as also most desirous of remaining his Majesty's humble servant, while Elector Truchsess was said to be employing himself, in the same cause, with very great affection."[2]

A French statesman resident in the Provinces, whose name has not been preserved, but who was evidently on intimate terms with many eminent Netherlanders, declared that Maurice, "who had a mind entirely French, deplored infinitely the misfortunes of France, and regretted that all the Provinces could not be annexed to so fair a kingdom. I do assure you," he added, "that he is in no wise English."[3]

by us, what hazard and extremety soever we run into; yet he excused the Prince that he was not French in mind, but for necessity and connivency, to conserve the churches in France, and to breed jealousy and pique between those great kings, whereof the defence and relief of those countries and religion might ensue and be continued." (Herle to Q. Elizabeth, MS. *ubi sup.*)

[1] Wagenaar, viii. 50.

[2] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c. i. 2, 3.

[3] Ibid. 15.

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Of Count Hohenlo, general-in-chief of the States' army under Prince Maurice, and afterwards his brother-in-law, the same gentleman spoke with even greater confidence. "Count d'Oloc," said he (for by that ridiculous transformation of his name the German general was known to French and English), "with whom I have passed three weeks on board the fleet of the States, is now wholly French, and does not love the English at all. The very first time I saw him, he protested twice or thrice, in presence of members of the States General and of the State Council, that if he had no Frenchmen he could never carry on the war. He made more account," he said, "of two thousand French than of six thousand others, English, or Germans."[1]

Yet all these distinguished persons—the widowed Princess of Orange, Count Maurice, ex-elector Truchsess, Count Hohenlo—were described to Queen Elizabeth by her confidential agent, then employed in the Provinces, as entirely at that sovereign's devotion.

"Count Maurice holds nothing of the French, nor esteems them," said Herle, "but humbly desired me to signify unto your Majesty that he had in his mind and determination faithfully vowed his service to your Majesty, which should be continued in his actions with all duty, and sealed with his blood; for he knew how much his father and the cause were beholden ever to your Highness's goodness."[2]

The Princess, together with her sister-in-law Countess Schwartzenburg, and the young daughters of the late Prince were described on the same occasion "as recommending their service unto her Majesty with a most tender affection, as to a lady of all ladies." "Especially," said Herle, "did the two Princesses in most humble and wise sort, express a certain fervent devotion towards your Majesty."[3]

Elector Truchsess was spoken of as "a prince well qualified and greatly devoted to her Majesty; who, after many grave and sincere words had of her Majesty's virtue, calling her

[1] Ibid. [2] Letter of Herle, before cited. [3] Ibid.

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la fille unique de Dieu, and le bien heureuse Princesse, desired of God that he might do her service as she merited."[1]

And, finally, Count Hollock—who seemed to "be reformed in sundry things, if it hold" (a delicate allusion to the Count's propensity for strong potations), was said "to desire humbly to be known for one that would obey the commandment of her Majesty more than of any earthly prince living besides."[2]

There can be no doubt that there was a strong party in favour of an appeal to England rather than to France. The Netherlanders were too shrewd a people not to recognize the difference between the king of a great realm, who painted his face and wore satin petticoats, and the woman who entertained ambassadors, each in his own language, on gravest affairs of state, who matched in her wit and wisdom the deepest or the most sparkling intellects of her council, who made extemporaneous Latin orations to her universities, and who rode on horseback among her generals along the lines of her troops in battle-array, and yet was only the unmarried queen of a petty and turbulent state.

"The reverend respect that is borne to your Majesty throughout these countries is great," said William Herle. They would have thrown themselves into her arms, heart and soul, had they been cordially extended at that moment of their distress; but she was coy, hesitating, and, for reasons already sufficiently indicated, although not so conclusive as they seemed, disposed to temporize and to await the issue of the negotiations between the Provinces and France.

In Holland and Zeeland especially, there was an enthusiastic feeling in favour of the English alliance. "They recommend themselves," said Herle, "throughout the country in their consultations and assemblies, as also in their common and private speeches, to the Queen of England's only favour and goodness, whom they call their saviour, and the Princess of greatest perfection in wisdom and sincerity that ever governed. Notwithstanding their treaty now on foot by their deputies with France, they are not more disposed to be

[1] Letter of Herle, before cited. [2] Ibid.

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governed by the French than to be tyrannized over by the Spaniard; concluding it to be alike; and even *commutare non sortem sed servitutem.*"[1]

Paul Buys was indefatigable in his exertions against the treaty with France, and in stimulating the enthusiasm for England and Elizabeth. He expressed sincere and unaffected devotion to the Queen on all occasions, and promised that no negotiations should take place, however secret and confidential, that were not laid before her Majesty.[2] "He has the chief administration among the States," said Herle, "and to his credit and dexterity they attribute the despatch of most things. He showed unto me the state of the enemy throughout the provinces, and of the negotiation in France, whereof he had no opinion at all of success, nor any will of his own part but to please the Prince of Orange in his life-time."[3]

It will be seen in the sequel whether or not the views of this experienced and able statesman were lucid and comprehensive. It will also be seen whether his strenuous exertions in favour of the English alliance were rewarded as bountifully as they deserved, by those most indebted to him.

Meantime he was busily employed in making the English

[1] Ibid.

Sainte Aldegonde and Villiers favoured the French policy. Sainte Aldegonde was burgomaster of Antwerp, but even in that city, although so many influential persons looked to France, the people generally had more confidence in England. "The accepting of the French king as prince of these countries," wrote Le Sieur to Walsingham, "is much sought by some that govern this day here; but in the ears of the common people it soundeth but evil, though the report be here that Holland and Zeeland have almost accepted him. If it would please her Majesty to give ear unto it, she could have the country cheap enough. Je juge que Sa Majesté auroit bon marché de ce pays." (Le Sieur to Walsingham, 7 Sept. 1584. S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Treslong, too, Admiral of Holland and Zeeland, and Governor of Ostend, made no secret of his preference for England. He avowed himself publicly her Majesty's faithful servant. Entertaining hospitably, at his table in Ostend, Captain Richards and other English officers who had come with troops from Flushing, he pledged a bumper to the Queen's health, and another to that of Walsingham, praying that Elizabeth might yet be his sovereign.

"Nevertheless," said he, "I have letters from Zeeland, by which it appears that that province is about to deliver itself to the queen-mother of France."

"And begging your pardon," said Richards, "what towns will you give them for garrison?"

"No towns at all," answered the Admiral, "let them lie on the dykes!" After dinner he conducted the English officers over the town, showing them the fortifications and renewing his protestations of devotion to her Majesty. (Richards to Walsingham, 9 Sept., 1584, S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Letter of Herle, before cited.

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government acquainted with the capacity, disposition, and general plans of the Netherlanders.

"They have certain other things in consultation amongst the States to determine of," wrote Herle, "which they were sworn not to reveal to any, but Buys protested that nothing should pass but to your liking and surety, and the same to be altered and disposed as should seem good to your Highness's own authority; affirming to me sincerely that Holland and Zeeland, with the rest of the provinces, for the estimation they had of your high virtue and temperancy, would yield themselves absolutely to your Majesty and crown for ever, or to none other (their liberties only reserved), whereof you should have immediate possession, without reservation of place or privilege."[1]

The important point of the capability of the Provinces to defend themselves, about which Elizabeth was most anxious to be informed, was also fully elucidated by the Advocate. "The means should be such, proceeding from the Provinces," said he, "as your Majesty might defend your interest therein with facility against the whole world." He then indicated a plan, which had been proposed by the States of Brabant to the States General, according to which they were to keep on foot an army of 15,000 foot and 5000 horse, with which they should be able, "to expulse the enemy and to reconquer their towns and country lost, within three months." Of this army they hoped to induce the Queen to furnish 5000 English footmen and 500 horse, to be paid monthly by a treasurer of her own; and for the assistance thus to be furnished they proposed to give Ostend and Sluys as pledge of payment. According to this scheme the elector palatine, John Casimir, had promised to furnish, equip, and pay 2000 cavalry, taking the town of Maestricht and the country of Limburg, when freed from the enemy, in pawn for his disbursements; while Antwerp and Brabant had agreed to supply 300,000 crowns in ready money for immediate use. Many powerful politicians opposed this policy, however, and urged reliance upon

[1] Letter of Herle, before cited.

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France, "so that this course seemed to be lame in many parts."[1]

Agents had already been sent both to England and France, to procure, if possible, a levy of troops for immediate necessity. The attempt was unsuccessful in France, but the Dutch community of the reformed religion in London subscribed nine thousand and five florins.[2] This sum, with other contributions, proved sufficient to set Morgan's regiment on foot, which soon after began to arrive in the Netherlands by companies. "But if it were all here at once," said Stephen Le Sieur, "'t would be but a breakfast for the enemy."[3]

The agent for the matter in England was De Griyse, formerly bailiff of Bruges; and although tolerably successful in his mission, he was not thought competent for so important a post, nor officially authorised for the undertaking. While procuring this assistance in English troops he had been very urgent with the Queen to further the negotiations between the States and France;[4] and Paul Buys was offended with him as a mischief-maker and an intriguer. He complained of him as having "thrust himself in, to deal and intermeddle in the affairs of the Low Countries unavowed," and desired that he might be closely looked after.[5]

After the Advocate, the next most important statesman in the provinces was, perhaps, Meetkerk, President of the High Court of Flanders, a man of much learning, sincerity, and earnestness of character; having had great experience in the diplomatic service of the country on many important occasions. "He stands second in reputation here," said Herle, "and both Buys and he have one special care in all practises that are discovered, to examine how near anything may concern your person or kingdom, whereof they will advertise as matter shall fall out in importance."[6]

John van Olden-Barneveldt, afterwards so conspicuous in the history of the country, was rather inclined, at this period, to

[1] Letter of Herle, before cited.
[2] Meteren, xii. 217.
[3] Le Sieur to Walsingham, 7 Sept. 1584. (S. P. Office MS.)
[4] Meteren, xii. 217.
[5] Letter of Herle, MS.
[6] Ibid.

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favour the French party; a policy which was strenuously furthered by Villiers and by Sainte Aldegonde.

Besides the information furnished to the English government, as to the state of feeling and resources of the Netherlands, by Buys, Meetkerk, and William Herle, Walsingham relied much upon the experienced eye and the keen biting humour of Roger Williams.

A frank open-hearted Welshman, with no fortune but his sword, but as true as its steel, he had done the States much important service in the hard-fighting days of Grand Commander Requesens and of Don John of Austria. With a shrewd Welsh head under his iron morion, and a stout Welsh heart under his tawny doublet, he had gained little but hard knocks and a dozen wounds in his campaigning, and had but recently been ransomed, rather grudgingly by his government, from a Spanish prison in Brabant. He was suffering in health from its effects, but was still more distressed in mind, from his sagacious reading of the signs of the times. Fearing that England was growing lukewarm, and the Provinces desperate, he was beginning to find himself out of work, and was already casting about him for other employment. Poor, honest, and proud, he had repeatedly declined to enter the Spanish service. Bribes, such as at a little later period were sufficient to sully conspicuous reputations and noble names, among his countrymen in better circumstances than his own, had been freely but unsuccessfully offered him. To serve under any but the English or States' flag in the Provinces he scorned; and he thought the opportunity fast slipping away there for taking the Papistical party in Europe handsomely by the beard. He had done much manful work in the Netherlands, and was destined to do much more; but he was now discontented, and thought himself slighted. In more remote regions of the world, the thrifty soldier thought that there might be as good harvesting for his sword as in the thrice-trampled stubble of Flanders.

"I would refuse no hazard that is possible to be done in the Queen's service," he said to Walsingham; "but I do

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persuade myself she makes no account of me. Had it not been for the duty that nature bound me towards her and my country, I needed not to have been in that case that I am in. Perhaps I could have fingered more pistoles than Mr. Newell, the late Latiner, and had better usage and pension of the Spaniards than he. Some can tell that I refused large offers, in the misery of Alost, of the Prince of Parma. Last of all, Verdugo offered me very fair, being in Loccum, to quit the States' service, and accept theirs, without treachery or betraying of place or man." [1]

Not feeling inclined to teach Latin in Spain, like the late Mr. Newell, or to violate oaths and surrender fortresses, like brave soldiers of fortune whose deeds will be afterwards chronicled, he was disposed to cultivate the "acquaintance of divers Pollacks," from which he had received invitations. "Find I nothing there," said he, "Duke Matthias has promised me courtesy if I would serve in Hungary. If not, I will offer service to one of the Turk's bashaws against the Persians." [2]

Fortunately, work was found for the trusty Welshman in the old fields. His brave honest face often reappeared; his sharp sensible tongue uttered much sage counsel; and his ready sword did various solid service, in leaguer, battle-field, and martial debate, in Flanders, Holland, Spain, and France.

For the present, he was casting his keen glances upon the negotiations in progress, and cavilling at the general policy which seemed predominant.

He believed that the object of the French was to trifle with the States, to protract interminably their negotiations, to prevent the English government from getting any hold upon the Provinces, and then to leave them to their fate.

He advised Walsingham to advance men and money, upon the security of Sluys and Ostend.

"I dare venture my life," said he, with much energy, "that were Norris, Bingham, Yorke, or Carlisle, in those ports, he would keep them during the Spanish King's life." [3]

[1] Roger Williams to Sir F. Walsingham, Sept. 1584. (S. P. Office, MS.)
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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But the true way to attack Spain—a method soon afterwards to be carried into such brilliant effect by the naval heroes of England and the Netherlands—the long-sighted Welshman now indicated; a combined attack, namely, by sea upon the colonial possessions of Philip.

"I dare be bound," said he, "if you join with Treslong, the States' Admiral, and send off, both, three-score sail into his Indies, we will force him to retire from conquering further, and to be contented to let other princes live as well as he." [1]

In particular, Williams urged rapid action, and there is little doubt, that had the counsels of prompt, quick-witted, ready-handed soldiers like himself, and those who thought with him, been taken; had the stealthy but quick-darting policy of Walsingham prevailed over the solemn and stately but somewhat ponderous proceedings of Burghley, both Ghent and Antwerp might have been saved, the trifling and treacherous diplomacy of Catharine de' Medici neutralized, and an altogether more fortunate aspect given at once to the state of Protestant affairs.

"If you mean to do anything," said he, "it is more than time now. If you will send some man of credit about it, will it please your honour, I will go with him, because I know the humour of the people, and am acquainted with a number of the best. I shall be able to show him a number of their dealings, as well with the French as in other affairs, and perhaps will find means to send messengers to Ghent, and to other places, better than the States; for the message of one soldier is better than twenty boors." [2]

It was ultimately decided—as will soon be related—to send a man of credit to the Provinces. Meantime, the policy of England continued to be expectant and dilatory, and Advocate Buys, after having in vain attempted to conquer the French influence, and bring about the annexation of the Provinces to England, threw down his office in disgust, and retired for a time from the contest. He even contemplated

[1] Roger Williams to Sir F. Walsingham, Sept. 1584. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Ibid.

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for a moment taking service in Denmark, but renounced the notion of abandoning his country, and he will accordingly be found, at a later period, conspicuous in public affairs.[1]

The deliberations in the English councils were grave and anxious, for it became daily more obvious that the Netherland question was the hinge upon which the whole fate of Christendom was slowly turning. To allow the provinces to fall back again into the grasp of Philip, was to offer England herself as a last sacrifice to the Spanish Inquisition. This was felt by all the statesmen in the land; but some of them, more than the rest, had a vivid perception of the danger, and of the necessity of dealing with it at once.

To the prophetic eye of Walsingham, the mists of the future at times were lifted; and the countless sails of the invincible Armada, wafting defiance and destruction to England, became dimly visible. He felt that the great Netherland bulwark of Protestantism and liberty was to be defended at all hazards, and that the death-grapple could not long be deferred.

Burghley, deeply pondering, but less determined, was still disposed to look on and to temporize.

The Queen, far-seeing and anxious, but somewhat hesitating, still clung to the idea of a joint protectorate. She knew that the reëstablishment of Spanish authority in the Low Countries would be fatal to England, but she was not yet prepared to throw down the gauntlet to Philip. She felt that the proposed annexation of the Provinces to France would be almost as formidable; yet she could not resolve, frankly and fearlessly, to assume the burthen of their protection. Under the inspiration of Burghley, she was therefore willing to encourage the Netherlanders underhand; preventing them at every hazard from slackening in their determined hostility to Spain; discountenancing, without absolutely forbidding, their proposed absorption by France; intimating, without promising, an ultimate and effectual assistance from herself. Meantime, with something of

[1] Wagenaar, viii. 50.

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feline and feminine duplicity, by which the sex of the great sovereign would so often manifest itself in the most momentous affairs, she would watch and wait, teasing the Provinces, dallying with the danger, not quite prepared as yet to abandon the prize to Henry or Philip, or to seize it herself.

The situation was rapidly tending to become an impossible one.

Late in October a grave conference was held in the English council, "upon the question whether her Majesty should presently relieve the States of the Low Countries."

It was shown, upon one side, that the "perils to the Queen and to the realm were great, if the King of Spain should recover Holland and Zeeland, as he had the other countries, for lack of succour in seasonable time, either by the French King or the Queen's Majesty."

On the other side, the great difficulties in the way of effectual assistance by England, were "fully remembered."

"But in the end, and upon comparison made," said Lord Burghley, summing up, "betwixt the perils on the one part, and the difficulties on the other," it was concluded that the Queen would be obliged to succumb to the power of Spain, and the liberties of England be hopelessly lost, if Philip were then allowed to carry out his designs, and if the Provinces should be left without succour at his mercy.[1]

A "wise person" was accordingly to be sent into Holland; first, to ascertain whether the Provinces had come to an actual

[1] The report of the conference is in the State Paper Office, written in Burghley's own hand. A brief extract will give a characteristic specimen of the Lord Treasurer's style:—"But in the end, and upon comparison made betwixt the perils on the one part and the difficulties of the other, it was concluded to advise her Majesty rather to seek the avoiding and directing of the great perils, than, in respect of any difficulties, to suffer the King of Spain to grow to the full height of his designs and conquests, whereby the perils were to follow so evident as if presently he were not by succouring of the Hollanders and their party impeached, the Queen's Majesty should not hereafter be any wise able to withstand the same. And therefore it was thought good that her Majesty should send presently some wise person into Holland," &c. (Holland Correspondence, S. P. Office, Oct. 10, 1584, M.S.)

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agreement with the King of France, and, if such should prove to be the case, to enquire whether that sovereign had pledged himself to declare war upon Philip. In this event, the wise person was to express her Majesty's satisfaction that the Provinces were thus to be "relieved from the tyranny of the King of Spain."

On the other hand, if it should appear that no such conclusive arrangements had been made, and that the Provinces were likely to fall again victims to the "Spanish tyranny," her Majesty would then "strain herself as far as, with preservation of her own estate, she might, to succour them at this time."[1]

The agent was then to ascertain "what conditions the Provinces would require" upon the matter of succour, and, if the terms seemed reasonable, he would assure them that "they should not be left to the cruelties of the Spaniards."

And further, the wise person, "being pressed to answer, might by conference of speeches and persuasions provoke them to offer to the Queen the ports of Flushing and Middelburg and the Brill, wherein she meant not to claim any property, but to hold them as gages for her expenses, and for performances of their covenants."

He was also to make minute inquiries as to the pecuniary resources of the Provinces, the monthly sums which they would be able to contribute, the number of troops and of ships of war that they would pledge themselves to maintain. These investigations were very important, because the Queen, although very well disposed to succour them, "so nevertheless she was to consider how her power might be extended, without ruin or manifest peril to her own estate."

It was also resolved, in the same conference, that a preliminary step of great urgency was to "procure a good peace with the King of Scots." Whatever the expense of bringing about such a pacification might be, it was certain that a "great deal more would be expended in defending the realm

[1] Holland Correpondence. S. P. Office, Oct. 10, 1584, MS.

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against Scotland," while England was engaged in hostilities with Spain. Otherwise, it was argued that her Majesty would be "so impeached by Scotland in favour of the King of Spain, that her action against that King would be greatly weakened."

Other measures necessary to be taken in view of the Spanish war were also discussed. The ex-elector of Cologne, "a man of great account in Germany," was to be assisted with money to make head against his rival supported by the troops of Philip.

Duke Casimir of the Palatinate was to be solicited to make a diversion in Gelderland.

The King of France was to be reminded of his treaty with England for mutual assistance in case of the invasion by a foreign power of either realm, and to be informed "not only of the intentions of the Spaniards to invade England, upon their conquest of the Netherlands, but of their actual invasion of Ireland."

It was "to be devised how the King of Navarre and Don Antonio of Portugal, for their respective titles, might be induced to offend and occupy the King of Spain, whereby to diminish his forces bent upon the Low Countries."

It was also decided that Parliament should be immediately summoned, in which, besides the request of a subsidy, many other necessary provisions should be made for her Majesty's safety.

"The conclusions of the whole," said Lord Burghley, with much earnestness, "was this. Although her Majesty should hereby enter into a war presently, yet were she better to do it now, while she may make the same out of her realm, having the help of the people of Holland, and before the King of Spain shall have consummated his conquests in those countries, whereby he shall be so provoked with pride, solicited by the Pope, and tempted by the Queen's own subjects, and shall be so strong by sea, and so free from all other actions and quarrels,—yea, shall be so formidable to all the rest of Christendom, as that her Majesty shall no wise be

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able, with her own power, nor with aid of any other, neither by sea nor land, to withstand his attempts, but shall be forced to give place to his insatiable malice, which is most terrible to be thought of, but miserable to suffer."[1]

Thus did the Lord Treasurer wisely, eloquently, and well, describe the danger by which England was environed. Through the shield of Holland the spear was aimed full at the heart of England. But was it a moment to linger? Was that buckler to be suffered to fall to the ground, or to be raised only upon the arm of a doubtful and treacherous friend? Was it an hour when the protection of Protestantism and of European liberty against Spain was to be entrusted to the hand of a feeble and priest-ridden Valois? Was it wise to indulge any longer in doubtings and dreamings, and in yet a little more folding of the arms to sleep, while that insatiable malice, so terrible to be thought of, so miserable to feel, was growing hourly more formidable, and approaching nearer and nearer?

Early in December, William Davison, gentleman-in-ordinary of her Majesty's household, arrived at the Hague; a man painstaking, earnest, and zealous, but who was fated, on more than one great occasion, to be made a scape-goat for the delinquencies of greater personages than himself.

He had audience of the States General on the 8th December. He then informed that body that the Queen had heard, with sorrowful heart, of the great misfortunes which the United Provinces had sustained since the death of the Prince of Orange; the many cities which they had lost, and the disastrous aspect of the common cause. Moved by the affection which she had always borne the country, and anxious for its preservation, she had ordered her ambassador Stafford to request the King of France to undertake, jointly with herself, the defence of the provinces against the King of Spain. Not till very lately, however, had that envoy succeeded in obtaining an audience, and he had then received "a very cold answer." It being obvious to her Majesty, therefore, that

[1] MS. Report of Burghley, before cited.

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the French government intended to protract these matters indefinitely, Davison informed the States that she had commissioned him to offer them "all possible assistance, to enquire into the state of the country, and to investigate the proper means of making that assistance most useful." He accordingly requested the appointment of a committee to confer with him upon the subject; and declared that the Queen did not desire to make herself mistress of the Provinces, but only to be informed how she best could aid their cause.[1]

A committee was accordingly appointed, and a long series of somewhat concealed negotiations was commenced. As the deputies were upon the eve of their departure for France, to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces to Henry, these proceedings were necessarily confused, dilatory, and at times contradictory.

After the arrival of the deputies in France, the cunctative policy inspired by the Lord Treasurer was continued by England. The delusion of a joint protectorate was still clung to by the Queen, although the conduct of France was becoming very ambiguous, and suspicion growing darker as to the ultimate and secret purport of the negotiations in progress.[2]

The anxiety and jealousy of Elizabeth were becoming keener than ever. If the offers to the King were unlimited, he would accept them, and would thus become as dangerous as Philip. If they were unsatisfactory, he would turn his back upon the Provinces, and leave them a prey to Philip.[3] Still she would not yet renounce the hope of bringing the French King over to an ingenuous course of action. It was thought, too, that something might be done with the great malcontent nobles of Flanders, whose defection from the national cause had been so disastrous, but who had been much influenced in their course, it was thought, by their jealousy of William the Silent.

[1] Register van de Resolution der Staten General, 8 Dec. 1584. (Hague Archives MS.)

[2] Queen to W. Davison, 14 Jan. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Ibid.

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Now that the Prince was dead, it was thought probable that the Arschots, and Havres, Chimays, and Lalaings, might arouse themselves to more patriotic views than they had manifested when they espoused the cause of Spain.

It would be desirable to excite their jealousy of French influence, and, at the same time, to inspire throughout the popular mind the fear of another tyranny almost as absolute as that of Spain. "And if it be objected," said Burghley, "that except they shall admit the French King to the *absolute dominion*, he will not aid them, and they, for lack of succour, be forced to yield to the Spaniard, it may be answered that rather than they should be wholly subjected to the French, or overcome by the Spaniard, her Majesty would yield unto them as much as, with preservation of her estate, and defence of her own country, might be demanded."[1]

The real object kept in view by the Queen's government was, in short, to obtain for the Provinces and for the general cause of liberty the greatest possible amount of assistance from Henry, and to allow him to acquire in return the least possible amount of power. The end proposed was a reasonable one, but the means employed savoured too much of intrigue.

"It may be easily made probable to the States," said the Lord Treasurer, "that the government of the French is likely to prove as cumbersome and perilous as that of the Spaniards; and likewise it may probably be doubted how the French will keep touch and covenants with them, when any opportunity shall be offered to break them; so that her Majesty thinketh no good can be looked for to those countries by yielding this large authority to the French. If they shall continue their title by this grant to be absolute lords, there is no end, for a long time, to be expected of this war; and, contrariwise, if they break off, there is an end of any good composition with the King of Spain."[2]

Shivering and shrinking, but still wading in deeper and deeper, inch by inch, the cautious minister was fast finding

[1] MS. *ubi sup.* [2] Ibid.

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himself too far advanced to retreat. He was rarely decided, however, and never lucid; and least of all in emergencies, when decision and lucidity would have been more valuable than any other qualities.

Deeply doubting, painfully balancing, he at times drove the unfortunate Davison almost distraught. Puzzled himself and still more puzzling to others, he rarely permitted the Netherlanders, or even his own agents, to perceive his drift. It was fair enough, perhaps, to circumvent the French government by its own arts, but the Netherlanders meanwhile were in danger of sinking into despair.

"Thus," wrote the Lord Treasurer to the envoy, "I have discoursed to you of these uncertainties and difficulties, things not unknown to yourself, but now being imparted to you by her Majesty's commandment, you are, by your wisdom, to consider with whom to deal for the stay of this French course, and yet, so to use it (as near as you may) that they of the French faction there be not able to charge you therewith, by advertising into France. For it hath already appeared, by some speeches past between our ambassador there and Des Pruneaux, that you are had in some jealousy as a hinderer of this French course, and at work for her Majesty to have some entrance and partage in that country. Nevertheless our ambassador, by his answer, hath satisfied them to think the contrary."[1]

They must have been easily satisfied, if they knew as much of the dealings of her Majesty's government as the reader already knows. To inspire doubt of the French, to insinuate the probability of their not "keeping touch and covenant," to represent their rule as "cumbersome and perilous," was wholesome conduct enough towards the Netherlanders—and still more so, had it been accompanied with frank offers of assistance—but it was certainly somewhat to "hinder the courses of the French."

But in truth all parties were engaged for a season in a round game of deception, in which nobody was deceived.

[1] MS. last cited.

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Walsingham was impatient, almost indignant at this puerility. "Your doings, no doubt of it," he wrote to Davison, "are observed by the French faction, and therefore *you cannot proceed so closely but it will be espied.* Howsoever it be, *seeing direction groweth from hence, we cannot but blame ourselves,* if the effects thereof do not fall out to our liking."[1]

That sagacious statesman was too well informed, and too much accustomed to penetrate the designs of his antagonists, to expect anything from the present intrigues.

To loiter thus, when mortal blows should be struck, was to give the Spanish government exactly that of which it was always most gluttonous—time; and the Netherlanders had none of it to spare. "With time and myself, there are two of us," was Philip II.'s favourite observation; and the Prince of Parma was at this moment sorely perplexed by the parsimony and the hesitations of his own government, by which his large, swift and most creative genius was so often hampered.

Thus the Spanish soldiers, deep in the trenches, went with bare legs and empty stomachs in January; and the Dutchmen, among their broken dykes, were up to their ears in mud and water; and German mercenaries, in the obedient Provinces, were burning the peasants' houses in order to sell the iron to buy food withal;[2] while grave-visaged statesmen, in comfortable cabinets, wagged their long white beards at each other from a distance, and exchanged grimaces and protocols which nobody heeded.

Walsingham was weary of this solemn trifling. "I conclude," said he to Davison, "that her Majesty—with reverence be it spoken—is ill advised, to direct you in a course that is like to work so great peril. I know you will do your best endeavour to keep all things upright, and yet it is hard—the disease being now come to this state, or, as the physicians term it, crisis—to carry yourself in such sort, but that it will, I fear, breed a dangerous alteration in the cause."[3]

[1] Walsingham to Davison, 14 Jan. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Richards to Walsingham, Sept. 9, 1584. (S. P. Office MS.)
[3] Walsingham to Davison. (MS. before cited.)

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He denounced with impatience, almost with indignation, the insincerity and injustice of these intolerable hesitations. "Sorry am I," said he, "to see the course that is taken in this weighty cause, *for we will neither help those poor countries ourselves, nor yet suffer others to do it.* I am not ignorant that in time to come the annexing of these countries to the crown of France may prove prejudicial to England, but if France refuse to deal with them, *and the rather for that we shall minister some cause of impediment by a kind of dealing underhand,* then shall they be forced to return into the hands of Spain, which is like to breed such a present peril towards her Majesty's self, *as never a wise man that seeth it, and loveth her, but lamenteth it from the bottom of his heart.*"[1]

Walsingham had made up his mind that it was England, not France, that should take up the cause of the Provinces, and defend them at every hazard. He had been overruled, and the Queen's government had decided to watch the course of the French negotiation, doing what it could, underhand, to prevent that negotiation from being successful. The Secretary did not approve of this disingenuous course. At the same time he had no faith in the good intentions of the French court.

"I could wish," said he, "that the French King were carried with that honourable mind into the defence of these countries that her Majesty is, but France has not been used to do things for God's sake; neither do they mean to use our advice or assistance in making of the bargain. For they still hold a jealous conceit that when Spain and they are together by the ears, we will seek underhand to work our own peace."[2] Walsingham, therefore, earnestly deprecated the attitude provisionally maintained by England.

Meantime, early in January, the deputation from the Pro-
3 Jan. 1585. vinces had arrived in France. The progress of their negotiation will soon be related, but, before its result was known, a general dissatisfaction had already manifested itself in the Netherlands. The factitious enthusiasm which

[1] Walsingham to Davison, MS. before cited. [2] Ibid.

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had been created in favour of France, as well as the prejudice against England, began to die out. It became probable in the opinion of those most accustomed to read the signs of the times, that the French court was acting in connivance with Philip, and that the negotiation was only intended to amuse the Netherlanders, to circumvent the English, and to gain time both for France and Spain. It was not believed that the character of Henry or the policy of his mother was likely to be the source of any substantial aid to the cause of civil liberty or Protestant principles.

"They look for no better fruit from the commission to France," wrote Davison, who surveyed the general state of affairs with much keenness and breadth of vision, "than a dallying entertainment of the time,—neither leaving them utterly hopeless, nor at full liberty to seek for relief elsewhere, especially in England,—or else some pleasing motion of peace, wherein the French King will offer his mediation with Spain. Meantime the people, wearied with the troubles, charges, and hazard of the war, shall be rocked asleep, the provision for their defence neglected, some Provinces nearest the danger seduced, the rest by their defection astonished, and the enemy by their decay and confusions, strengthened. This is the scope whereto the doings of the French King, not without intelligence with the Spanish sovereign, doth aim, whatever is pretended."[1]

There was a wide conviction that the French King was dealing falsely with the Provinces. It seemed certain that he must be inspired by intense jealousy of England, and that he was unlikely, for the sake of those whose "religion, popular liberty, and rebellion against their sovereign," he could not but disapprove, to allow Queen Elizabeth to steal a march upon him, and "make her own market with Spain to his cost and disadvantage."[2]

In short, it was suspected—whether justly or not will be presently shown—that Henry III. "was seeking to blear the eyes of the world, as his brother Charles did before the

[1] Davison to Walsingham, 12 Feb. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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Massacre of St. Bartholomew."[1] As the letters received from the Dutch envoys in France became less and less encouraging, and as the Queen was informed by her ambassador in Paris of the tergiversations in Paris, she became the more anxious lest the States should be driven to despair. She therefore wrote to Davison, instructing him "to nourish in them underhand some hope—as a thing proceeding from himself—that though France should reject them, yet she would not abandon them."[2]

He was directed to find out, by circuitous means, what towns they would offer to her as security for any advances she might be induced to make, and to ascertain the amount of monthly contributions towards the support of the war that they were still capable of furnishing. She was beginning to look with dismay at the expatriation of wealthy merchants and manufacturers going so rapidly forward, now that Ghent had fallen and Brussels and Antwerp were in such imminent peril. She feared that, while so much valuable time had been thrown away, the Provinces had become too much impoverished to do their own part in their own defence; and she was seriously alarmed at rumours which had become prevalent of a popular disposition towards treating for a peace at any price with Spain. It soon became evident that these rumours were utterly without foundation, but the other reasons for Elizabeth's anxiety were sufficiently valid.

On the whole, the feeling in favour of England was rapidly gaining ground. In Holland especially there was general indignation against the French party. The letters of the deputies occasioned "murmur and mislike" of most persons, who noted them to contain more ample report of ceremonies and compliments than solid argument of comfort."[3]

Sir Edward Stafford, who looked with great penetration into the heart of the mysterious proceedings at Paris, assured his government that no better result was to be looked for, "after long dalliance and entertainment, than either a flat

[1] Davison to Walsingham, *ubi. sup.*
[2] Queen to Davison, 18 Feb. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[3] Davison to Lord Burghley and Sir F. Walsingham, 28 Feb. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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refusal or such a masked embracing of their cause, as would rather tend to the increasing of their miseries and confusion than relief for their declining estate." While "reposing upon a broken reed," they were, he thought, "neglecting other means more expedient for their necessities."[1]

This was already the universal opinion in Holland. Men now remembered, with bitterness, the treachery of the Duke of Anjou, which they had been striving so hard to forget, but which less than two years ago had nearly proved fatal to the cause of liberty in the Provinces. A committee of the States had an interview with the Queen's envoy at the Hague; implored her Majesty through him not to abandon their cause; expressed unlimited regret for the course which had been pursued, and avowed a determination "to pluck their heads out of the collar," so soon as the opportunity should offer.[2]

They stated, moreover, that they had been directed by the assembly to lay before him the instructions for the envoys to France, and the articles proposed for the acceptance of the King. The envoy knew his business better than not to have secretly provided himself with copies of these documents, which he had already laid before his own government.

He affected, however, to feel hurt that he had been thus kept in ignorance of papers which he really knew by heart. "After some pretended quarrel," said he, "for their not acquainting me therewith sooner, I did accept them, as if I had before neither seen nor heard of them."[3]

This then was the aspect of affairs in the provinces during the absence of the deputies in France. It is now necessary to shift the scene to that country.

[1] Davison to Burghley and Walsingham *ubi sup.* [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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CHAPTER IV.

Reception of the Dutch Envoys at the Louvre — Ignominious Result of the Embassy — Secret Influences at work — Bargaining between the French and Spanish Courts — Claims of Catharine de' Medici upon Portugal — Letters of Henry and Catharine — Secret Proposal by France to invade England — States' Mission to Henry of Navarre — Subsidies of Philip to Guise — Treaty of Joinville — Philip's Share in the League denied by Parma — Philip in reality its Chief — Manifesto of the League — Attitude of Henry III. and of Navarre — The League demands a Royal Decree — Designs of France and Spain against England — Secret Interview of Mendoza and Villeroy — Complaints of English Persecution — Edict of Nemours — Excommunication of Navarre and his Reply.

THE King, notwithstanding his apparent reluctance, had, in Sir Edward Stafford's language, "nibbled at the bait." He had, however, not been secured at the first attempt, and now a second effort was to be made, under what were supposed to be most favourable circumstances. In accordance with his own instructions, his envoy, Des Pruneaux, had been busily employed in the States, arranging the terms of a treaty which should be entirely satisfactory. It had been laid down as an indispensable condition that Holland and Zeeland should unite in the offer of sovereignty, and, after the expenditure of much eloquence, diplomacy, and money, Holland and Zeeland had given their consent. The court had been for some time anxious and impatient for the arrival of the deputies. Early in December, Des Pruneaux wrote from Paris to Count Maurice, urging with some asperity, the necessity of immediate action.

"When I left you," he said, "I thought that performance would follow promises. I have been a little ashamed, as the time passed by, to hear nothing of the deputies, nor of any excuse on the subject. It would seem as though God had bandaged the eyes of those who have so much cause to know their own adversity."[1]

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c. i. 7.

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To the States his language was still more insolent. "Excuse me, Gentlemen," he said, "if I tell you that I blush at hearing nothing from you. I shall have the shame and you the damage. I regret much the capture of De Teligny, and other losses which are occasioned by your delays and want of resolution."

Thus did the French court, which a few months before had imprisoned, and then almost ignominiously dismissed the envoys who came to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces, now rebuke the governments which had ever since been strenuously engaged in removing all obstacles to the entire fulfillment of the King's demands. The States were just despatching a solemn embassy to renew that offer, with hardly any limitation as to terms.[1]

The envoys arrived on January 3rd, 1585, at Boulogne, after a stormy voyage from Brielle. Yet it seems incredible to relate, that, after all the ignominy heaped upon the last, there was nothing but solemn trifling in reserve for the present legation; although the object of both embassies was to offer a crown. The deputies were, however, not kept in prison, upon this occasion, nor treated like thieves or spies. They were admirably lodged, with plenty of cooks and lacqueys to minister to them; they fared sumptuously every day, at Henry's expense, and, after they had been six weeks in the kingdom, they at last succeeded in obtaining their first audience.

On the 13th February the King sent five "very splendid, richly-gilded, court-coach-waggons" to bring the envoys to the palace. At one o'clock they arrived at the Louvre, and were

[1] The deputies were appointed from each of the United Provinces: Merode, Hinkaert, Stralen, and Cornelius Aerssens represented Brabant; Chancellor Leoninus, John van Ghent, and Gerard Voet were appointed from Gelderland; Noel de Caron was deputy for Flanders, Arend van Dorp for Holland, John Valcke for Zeeland. Rengers and Amelis van Amstel for Utrecht, Teitsma and Aisma for Friesland, La Mouillerie and La Pré for Mechlin. The Prince of Espinoy, brother of the Marquis of Richebourg, but a patriotic Netherlander himself, was also commissioned to be of the legation, and he served at his own expense. (Wagenaar, viii. 55, 56; 'Dos Pruneaux aux Etats generaux,' 3rd Dec. 1584, Hague Archives, MS.; 'Brief van de Gedeputeerden in Frankryck aan de Staten Gen.' 19th Jan. 1585, Hague Archives, MS.)

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ushered through four magnificent antechambers into the royal cabinet. The apartments through which they passed swarmed with the foremost nobles, court-functionaries, and ladies of France, in blazing gala costume, who all greeted the envoys with demonstrations of extreme respect. The halls and corridors were lined with archers, halbardiers, Swiss guards, and grooms "besmeared with gold," and it was thought that all this rustle of fine feathers would be somewhat startling to the barbarous republicans, fresh from the fens of Holland.

Henry received them in his cabinet, where he was accompanied only by the Duke of Joyeuse—his foremost and bravest "minion"—by the Count of Bouscaige, M. de Valette, and the Count of Château Vieux.[1]

The most Christian King was neatly dressed, in white satin doublet and hose, and well-starched ruff, with a short cloak on his shoulders, a little velvet cap on the side of his head, his long locks duly perfumed and curled, his sword at his side, and a little basket, full of puppies, suspended from his neck by a broad ribbon. He held himself stiff and motionless, although his face smiled a good-humoured welcome to the ambassadors; and he moved neither foot, hand, nor head, as they advanced.

Chancellor Leoninus, the most experienced, eloquent, and tedious of men, now made an interminable oration, fertile in rhetoric and barren in facts; and the King made a short and benignant reply, according to the hallowed formula in such cases provided. And then there was a presentation to the Queen, and to the Queen-Mother, when Leoninus was more prolix than before, and Catharine even more affectionate than her son; and there were consultations with Chiverny and Villeroy, and Brulart and Pruneaux, and great banquets at the royal expense, and bales of protocols, and drafts of articles, and conditions and programmes and apostilles by the hundred weight, and at last articles of annexation were presented by the envoys, and Pruneaux looked at and pronounced them "too raw and imperative," and the envoys took them home

[1] MS. Letter of the Envoys, before cited.

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again, and dressed them and cooked them till there was no substance left in them; for whereas the envoys originally offered the crown of their country to France, on condition that no religion but the reformed religion should be tolerated there, no appointments made but by the States, and no security offered for advances to be made by the Christian King, save the hearts and oaths of his new subjects—so they now ended by proposing the sovereignty unconditionally, almost abjectly; and, after the expiration of nearly three months, even these terms were absolutely refused, and the deputies were graciously permitted to go home as they came. The annexation and sovereignty were definitely declined. Henry regretted and sighed, Catharine de' Medici wept—for tears were ever at her command—Chancellor Chiverny and Secretary Brulart wept likewise, and Pruneaux was overcome with emotion at the parting interview of the ambassadors with the court, in which they were allowed a last opportunity for expressing what was called their gratitude.

And then, on the 16th March, M. d'Oignon came to them, and presented, on the part of the King, to each of the envoys a gold chain weighing twenty-one ounces and two grains.[1]

Des Pruneaux, too—Des Pruneaux who had spent the previous summer in the Netherlands, who had travelled from province to province, from city to city, at the King's command, offering boundless assistance, if they would unanimously offer their sovereignty; who had vanquished by his importunity the resistance of the stern Hollanders, the last of all the Netherlanders to yield to the royal blandishments—Des Pruneaux, who had "blushed"—Des Pruneaux who had wept—now thought proper to assume an airy tone, half encouragement, half condolence.

"Man proposes, gentlemen," said he,[2] "but God disposes. We are frequently called on to observe that things have a

[1] MS. Report of the Envoys.

[2] "Messieurs, les hommes proposent, et Dieu est le maître qui dispose. Nous voyons toutes choses avoir différentz temps et termes; Prou sont refusés d'une femme deux fois quy l'emportent la troisieme," &c. ('Des Pruneaux aux Etats generaux,' 14th Mar. 1585, Brienne, MS.)

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great variety of times and terms. Many a man is refused by a woman twice, who succeeds the third time," and so on, with which wholesome apothegms Des Pruneaux faded away then and for ever from the page of Netherland history.

In a few days afterwards the envoys took shipping at Dieppe, and arrived early in April at the Hague.[1]

And thus terminated the negotiation of the States with France.

It had been a scene of elaborate trifling on the King's part from beginning to end. Yet the few grains of wheat which have thus been extracted from the mountains of diplomatic chaff so long mouldering in national storehouses, contain, however dry and tasteless, still something for human nourishment. It is something to comprehend the ineffable meanness of the hands which then could hold the destiny of mighty empires. Here had been offered a magnificent prize to France; a great extent of frontier in the quarter where expansion was most desirable, a protective network of towns and fortresses on the side most vulnerable, flourishing cities on the sea-coast where the marine traffic was most lucrative, the sovereignty of a large population, the most bustling, enterprising, and hardy in Europe—a nation destined in a few short years to become the first naval and commercial power in the world—all this was laid at the feet of Henry Valois and Catharine de' Medici, and rejected.

The envoys, with their predecessors, had wasted eight months of most precious time; they had heard and made orations, they had read and written protocols, they had witnessed banquets, masquerades, and revels of stupendous frivolity, in honour of the English Garter, brought solemnly to the Valois by Lord Derby, accompanied by one hundred gentlemen "marvellously, sumptuously, and richly accoutred," during that dreadful winter when the inhabitants of Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin—to save which splendid cities and to annex them to France, was a main object of the solemn embassy from the Netherlands—were eating rats, and cats, and dogs,

[1] MS. Report, Wagenaar, viii. 66.

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and the weeds from the pavements, and the grass from the churchyards; and were finding themselves more closely pressed than ever by the relentless genius of Farnese; and in exchange for all these losses and all this humiliation, the ambassadors now returned to their constituents, bringing an account of Chiverny's magnificent banquets and long orations, of the smiles of Henry III., the tears of Catharine de' Medici, the regrets of M. des Pruneaux, besides sixteen gold chains, each weighing twenty-one ounces and two grains.[1]

It is worth while to go for a moment behind the scenes, We have seen the actors, with mask and cothurn and tinsel crown, playing their well-conned parts upon the stage. Let us hear them threaten, and whimper, and chaffer among themselves.

So soon as it was intimated that Henry III. was about to grant the Netherland envoys an audience, the wrath of ambassador Mendoza was kindled. That magniloquent Spaniard instantly claimed an interview with the King, before whom, according to the statement of his colleagues,

[1] Brieven van de Gedeputeerden uyt Paris, 22nd Feb. 1585; Rapport van de Handeling gehouden by de Gesanten, &c.; Brief van de Gezanten uyt Paris, 11 Maart, 1585. (Hague Archives MS.) Compare De Thou, ix. 275, *seq.*; Strada, II. 292, *seq.*; Meteren, xii. 221, seq.; Le Petit, II. xiv. 508, *seq.*; Wagenaar, viii. 58; Bor, II. xix. 528, *seq.*

It is remarkable, that in all the conferences between the deputies and the ministers of Henry, and in all the expressions used by the King and his mother, as recorded by the envoys in their despatches and reports, no allusion was ever made to the civil war then brewing in France, nor to the machinations of the Guises,—*the name of which family was never mentioned.* The Court excused itself, as well as it could, for its elaborate trifling with the Netherlands, at so momentous an epoch, by general reflections upon the condition of France, and the inconvenience to the government at that moment, of engaging in the enterprize which it had itself solicited. All the contemporaneous historians, whether Protestant or Catholic, French, Flemish, or Spanish, give a very brief, imperfect, conventional, and generally mistaken view of these negotiations.

Le Petit, instead of the meagre farewell address of the King (which we have given in the text from the report of the envoys to their constituents) does not scruple to invent a very epigrammatic little speech for Henry, in which that monarch is made to complain bitterly of the "violence done to him by the King of Spain, the Guise family, and the leaguers," to regret that he is thereby prevented from assisting the Provinces, on the ground that 'his shirt is nearer to him than his doublet," and to hope that they will sustain themselves until he shall have got his kingdom quiet, after which the States may depend upon his assistance. It is superfluous to say that this and similar harangues recorded by various historians are purely imaginary.

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doing their best to pry into these secrets, he blustered and bounced, and was more fantastical in his insolence than even Spanish envoy had ever been before.

"He went presently to court," so Walsingham was informed by Stafford, "and dealt very passionately with the King and Queen-Mother to deny them audience, who being greatly offended with his presumptuous and malapert manner of proceeding, the King did in choler and with some sharp speeches, let him plainly understand that he was an absolute king, bound to yield account of his doings to no man, and that it was lawful for him to give access to any man within his own realm. The Queen-Mother answered him likewise very roundly, whereupon he departed for the time, very much discontented."[1]

Brave words, on both sides, if they had ever been spoken, or if there had been any action corresponding to their spirit.

But, in truth, from the beginning, Henry and his mother saw in the Netherland embassy only the means of turning a dishonest penny. Since the disastrous retreat of Anjou from the Provinces, the city of Cambray had remained in the hands of the Seigneur de Balagny, placed there by the duke. The citadel, garrisoned by French troops, it was not the intention of Catharine de' Medici to restore to Philip, and a truce on the subject had been arranged provisionally for a year. Philip, taking Parma's advice to prevent the French court, if possible, from "fomenting the Netherland rebellion," had authorized the Prince to conclude that truce, as if done on his own responsibility, and not by royal order.[2] Meantime, Balagny was gradually swelling into a petty potentate, on his own account, making himself very troublesome to the Prince of Parma, and requiring a great deal of watching. Cambray was however apparently acquired for France.

[1] Walsingham to Davison, $\frac{11}{21}$ Jan. 1585, S. P. Office MS. Compare De Thou, ix. 275, *seq.*; Strada, 'De Bello Belgico,' 1658, ii. 592, *seq.*; Meteren, xii. 221, *seq.*; Le Petit, II. xiv. 508, *seq.*; Busbequius, 'Epist.' *passim*.

[2] Philip II. to Prince of Parma, 2nd Sept. 1584, and 15th Jan. 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS. "Sera bien que la concluyais à trueque de conseguir esto con que no parezca orden mia sino que lo haceis como de vuestro," &c. Comp. Strada, II. 295.

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But, besides this acquisition, there was another way of earning something solid, by turning this Netherland matter handsomely to account. Philip II. had recently conquered Portugal. Among the many pretensions to that crown, those of Catharine de' Medici had been put forward, but had been little heeded. The claim went back more than three hundred years, and to establish its validity would have been to convert the peaceable possession of a long line of sovereigns into usurpation. To ascend to Alphonso III. was like fetching, as it was said, a claim from Evander's grandmother. Nevertheless, ever since Philip had been upon the Portuguese throne, Catharine had been watching the opportunity, not of unseating that sovereign, but of converting her claim into money.

The Netherland embassy seemed to offer the coveted opportunity. There was, therefore, quite as much warmth at the outset, on the part of Mendoza, in that first interview after the arrival of the deputies, as had been represented. There was however less dignity and more cunning on the part of Henry and Catharine than was at all suspected. Even before that conference the King had been impatiently expecting overtures from the Spanish envoy, and had been disappointed. "He told me," said Henry, "that he would make proposals so soon as Tassis should be gone, but he has done nothing yet. He said to Gondi that all he meant was to get the truce of Cambray accomplished. I hope, however, that my brother, the King of Spain, will do what is right in regard to madam my mother's pretensions. 'Tis likely that he will be now incited thereto, seeing that the deputies of all the Netherland provinces are at present in my kingdom, to offer me *carte blanche*. I shall hear what they have to say, and do exactly what the good of my own affairs shall seem to require. The Queen of England, too, has been very pressing and urgent with me for several months on this subject. I shall hear, too, what she has to say, and I presume, if the King of Spain will now disclose himself, and do promptly what he ought, that we may set Christendom at rest."[1]

[1] Henry III. à Longlée, 11 Jan. 1585, Brienne MS.

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Henry then instructed his ambassador in Spain to keep his eyes wide open, in order to penetrate the schemes of Philip, and to this end ordered him an increase of salary by a third, that he might follow that monarch on his journey to Arragon.

Meanwhile Mendoza had audience of his Majesty. "He made a very pressing remonstrance," said the King, "concerning the arrival of these deputies, urging me to send them back at once; denouncing them as disobedient rebels and heretics. I replied that my kingdom was free, and that I should hear from them all that they had to say, *because I could not abandon madam my mother in her pretensions, not only for the filial obedience which I owe her, but because I am her only heir.* Mendoza replied that he should go and make the same remonstrance to the Queen-Mother, which he accordingly did, and she will herself write you what passed between them. If they do not act up to their duty *down there* I know how to take my revenge upon them."[1]

This is the King's own statement—his veriest words—and he was surely best aware of what occurred between himself and Mendoza, under their four eyes only. The ambassador is not represented as extremely insolent, but only pressing; and certainly there is little left of the fine periods on Henry's part about listening to the cry of the oppressed, or preventing the rays of his ancestors' diadem from growing pale, with which contemporary chronicles are filled.

There was not one word of the advancement and glory of the French nation; not a hint of the fame to be acquired by a magnificent expansion of territory, still less of the duty to deal generously or even honestly with an oppressed people, who in good faith were seeking an asylum in exchange for offered sovereignty, not a syllable upon liberty of conscience, of religious or civil rights; nothing but a petty and exclusive care for the interests of his mother's pocket, and of his own as his mother's heir. This farthing-candle was alone to guide the steps of "the high and mighty King," whose reputation was perpetually represented as so precious to him in all the conferences between

[1] Henry III. à Longlée, 11 Jan., 1585, Brienne MS.

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his ministers and the Netherland deputies. Was it possible for those envoys to imagine the almost invisible meanness of such childish tricks?

The Queen-Mother was still more explicit and unblushing throughout the whole affair.

"The ambassador of Spain," she said, "has made the most beautiful remonstrances he could think of about these deputies from the Netherlands. All his talk, however, cannot persuade me to anything else save to increase my desire to have reparation for the wrong that has been done me in regard to my claims upon Portugal, which I am determined to pursue by every means within my power. Nevertheless I have told Don Bernardino that I should always be ready to embrace any course likely to bring about a peaceful conclusion. He then entered into a discussion of my rights, which, he said, were not thought in Spain to be founded in justice. But when I explained to him the principal points (of which I possess all the pieces of evidence and justification), he hardly knew what to say, save that he was astounded that I had remained so long without speaking of my claims. In reply, I told him ingenuously the truth."[1]

The truth which the ingenuous Catharine thus revealed was, in brief, that all her predecessors had been minors, women, and persons in situations not to make their rights valid. Finding herself more highly placed, she had advanced her claims, which had been so fully recognized in Portugal, that she had been received as Infanta of the kingdom. All pretensions to the throne being now through women only, hers were the best of any. At all this Don Bernardino expressed profound astonishment, and promised to send a full account to his master of "the infinite words" which had passed between them at this interview.[2]

[1] 'Lettre de la Reine à Longlée,' 16 Jan. 1585. 'Brienne MS.' "Il ne m'a sceu que dire aultre chose, sinon qu'il s'ebahissoit comme j'avois si long temps demouré sans parler de mes dictz droits, a quoi je luy ay respondu ingenument la verité, qui est," &c.

[2] Ibid. "Et croy qu'il n'y obmaetra rien d'infinies parolles que se sont passees de la substance dessus dicte en la dicte audiance," &c.

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"I desire," said Catharine, "that the Lord King of Spain should open his mind frankly and promptly upon the recompense which he is willing to make me for Portugal, in order that things may pass rather with gentleness than otherwise."

It was expecting a great deal to look for frankness and promptness from the Lord King of Spain, but the Queen-Mother considered that the Netherland envoys had put a whip into her hand. She was also determined to bring Philip up to the point, without showing her own game. "I will never say," said Catharine—ingenuous no longer—"I will never say how much I ask, but, on the contrary, I shall wait for him to make the offer. I expect it to be reasonable, because he has seen fit to seize and occupy that which I declare to be my property."[1]

This is the explanation of all the languor and trifling of the French court in the Netherland negotiation. A deep, constant, unseen current was running counter to all the movement which appeared upon the surface. The tergiversations of the Spanish cabinet in the Portugal matter were the cause of the shufflings of the French ministers on the subject of the Provinces.

"I know well," said Henry a few days later, "that the people down there, and their ambassador here, are leading us on with words, as far as they can, with regard to the recompense of madam my mother for her claims upon Portugal. But they had better remember (and I think they will), that out of the offers which these sixteen deputies of the Netherlands are bringing me—and I believe it to be *carte blanche*—I shall be able to pay myself. 'Twill be better to come promptly to a good bargain and a brief conclusion, than to spin the matter out longer."[3]

1 'Lettre de la Reine Mere à Longlée,' 16 Jan. 1585. 'Brienne MS.' "Je desirerois bien que le dict seigneur roi d'Espagne s'ouvrit franchement et promptement de la recompense qu'il me venet et doict faire pour le dict Portugal, affin que les choses passassent plustot par là doulcement qu'aultrement."

2 Ibid. "Je ne diray jamais ce que je demande, au contraire, attendrai ses offres qu'il fault qui soient raisonnables, puis qu'il est saisy et occupateur de ce que je pretendz m'appartenir," &c.

3 'Henry III. à Longlée,' 13 Jan.

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"Don Bernardino," said the Queen-Mother on the same day, "has been keeping us up to this hour in hopes of a good offer, but 'tis to be feared, *for the good of Christendom*, that 'twill be too late. The deputies are come, bringing *carte blanche*. Nevertheless, if the King of Spain is willing to be reasonable, and that instantly, it will be well, and it would seem as if God had been pleased to place this means in our hands."[1]

After the conferences had been fairly got under way between the French government and the envoys, the demands upon Philip for a good bargain and a handsome offer became still more pressing.

"I have given audience to the deputies from the Provinces," wrote Henry, "and the Queen-Mother has done the same. Chancellor Chiverny, Villequier, Bellièvre, and Brulart, will now confer with them from day to day. I now tell you that it will be well, *before things go any farther*, for the King of Spain to come to reason about the pretensions of madam mother. This will be a means of establishing the repose of Christendom. I shall be very willing to concur in such an arrangement, if I saw any approximation to it on the part of the King or his ministers. But I fear they will delay too long, and so you had better tell them. Push them to the point as much as possible, without letting them suspect that I have been writing about it, for that would make them rather draw back than come forward."[2]

At the same time, during this alternate threatening and coaxing between the French and the Spanish court, and in

1585. 'Brienne MS.' "Mais il doibvent bien considerer—que sur les offres que me viennent faire seize principaulx deputez des pays bas (les quelz m'apportent, à ce que j'entendz la carte blanche), j'y auray consideration, et vauldroit beaucoup mieulx venir promptement à une bonne negotiation et brielve conclusion d'icelle, que de tenir ainsy les choses a la longue," &c.

[1] 'La Reine Mere à Longlée,' 13 Jan. 1585. Brienne MS.'

[2] 'Henry III. à Longlée,' 21 Feb. 1585. "Il seroit très à propos, avant que les choses allassent plus avant que le Roy d'Espagne regardasse à se mectre à la raison pour les pretentions de la royne madame et mere," &c.—"Les incitant le plus qu'il vous sera possible, sans toutefois qu'ils puissent cognoistre que vous en ayant escript, car cela pourroit estre plustot cause de les en faire reculler qu'aultrement," &c. 'Brienne MS.'

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the midst of all the solemn and tedious protocolling of the ministry and the Dutch envoys, there was a most sincere and affectionate intercourse maintained between Henry III. and the Prince of Parma. The Spanish Governor-General was assured that nothing but the warmest regard was entertained for him and his master on the part of the French court. Parma had replied, however, that so many French troops had in times past crossed the frontier to assist the rebels, that he hardly knew what to think. He expressed the hope, now that the Duke of Anjou was dead, that his Christian Majesty would not countenance the rebellion, but manifest his good-will.

"How can your Highness doubt it," said Malpierre, Henry's envoy, "for his Majesty has given proof enough of his good will, having prevented all enterprises in this regard, and preferred to have his own subjects cut into pieces rather than that they should carry out their designs. Had his Majesty been willing merely to connive at these undertakings, 'tis probable that the affairs of your highness would not have succeeded so well as they have done."[1]

With regard to England, also, the conduct of Henry and his mother in these negotiations was marked by the same unfathomable duplicity. There was an appearance of cordiality on the surface; but there was deep plotting, and bargaining, and even deadly hostility lurking below. We have seen the efforts which Elizabeth's government had been making to counteract the policy which offered the sovereignty of the provinces to the French monarch. At the same time there was at least a loyal disposition upon the Queen's part to assist the Netherlands, in concurrence with Henry. The demeanour of Burghley and his colleagues was frankness itself, compared with the secret schemings of the Valois; for at least peace and good-will between the "triumvirate" of France, England and the Netherlands, was intended, as the true means of resisting the predominant influence of Spain.

Yet very soon after the solemn reception by Henry of the garter brought by Lord Derby, and in the midst of the nego-

[1] Malpierre à Henry III.,' 16 Fev. 1585. 'Brienne MS.'

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tiations between the French court and the United Provinces, the French king was not only attempting to barter the sovereignty offered him by the Netherlanders against a handsome recompense for the Portugal claim, but he was actually proposing to the King of Spain to join with him in an invasion of England! Even Philip himself must have admired and respected such a complication of villany on the part of his most Christian brother. He was, however, not disposed to put any confidence in his schemes.

"With regard to the attempt against England," wrote Philip to Mendoza, "you must keep your eyes open—you must look at the danger of letting them, before they have got rid of their rivals and reduced their heretics, go out of their own house and kingdom, and thus of being made fools of when they think of coming back again. Let them first exterminate the heretics of France, and then we will look after those of England; because 'tis more important to finish those who are near than those afar off. Perhaps the Queen-Mother proposes this invasion in order to proceed more feebly with matters in her own kingdom; and thus Mucio (Duke of Guise) and his friends will not have so safe a game, and must take heed lest they be deceived."

Thus it is obvious that Henry and Catharine intended, on the whole, to deceive the English and the Netherlanders, and to get as good a bargain and as safe a friendship from Philip as could be manufactured out of the materials placed in the French King's hands by the United Provinces. Elizabeth honestly wished well to the States, but allowed Burghley and those who acted with him to flatter themselves with the

[1] 'Philip II. to Bernardino de Mendoza,' 17 Aug. 1585. 'Archivo de Simancas.' A. 56, No. 28, MS., in the 'Archives de l'Empire' at Paris. "En lo de la impresa de Inglaterra, le yd abriendo los ojos para que eche de ver el peligro en que se pone, si antes de deshazer sus emulos y reducir a los hereges o echerlos, se dexa sacar fuera de su casa y del Reyno y quan burlado se podria hallar quando pensasse bolver. Que acaben prime los hereses de francia, y despues demos tras de Inglaterra, por que mas importa a todos acabar los de cerca que los de lejos, y quiça la Reyna madre propone la nueva impresa (de Inglaterra) por hazer afloxar con los hereges de dentro de su Reyno, y assi pues Mucio y los suyos no ternan cosa segura mientras estos estuvieren aqui, miren bien no se dexen engañar."

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chimera that Henry could be induced to protect the Netherlands without assuming the sovereignty of that commonwealth. The Provinces were fighting for their existence, unconscious of their latent strength, and willing to trust to France or to England, if they could only save themselves from being swallowed by Spain. As for Spain itself, that country was more practised in duplicity even than the government of the Medici-Valois, and was of course more than a match at the game of deception for the franker politicians of England and Holland.

The King of Navarre had meanwhile been looking on at a distance. Too keen an observer, too subtle a reasoner to doubt the secret source of the movements then agitating France to its centre, he was yet unable to foresee the turn that all these intrigues were about to take. He could hardly doubt that Spain was playing a dark and desperate game with the unfortunate Henry III.; for, as we have seen, he had himself not long before received a secret and liberal offer from Philip II., if he would agree to make war upon the King.[1] But the Béarnese was not the man to play into the hands of Spain, nor could he imagine the possibility of the Valois or even of his mother taking so suicidal a course.

After the Netherland deputies had received their final dismissal from the King, they sent Calvart, who had been secretary to their embassy, on a secret mission to Henry of Navarre, then resident at Chartres.

The envoy communicated to the Huguenot chief the meagre result of the long negotiation with the French court. Henry bade him be of good cheer, and assured him of his best wishes for their cause. He expressed the opinion that the King of France would now either attempt to overcome the Guise faction by gentle means, or at once make war upon them. The Bishop of Acqs had strongly recommended the French monarch to send the King of Navarre, with a strong force, to the assistance of the Netherlands, urging the point

[1] Herle to Queen Elizabeth, 22nd July, 1584, S. P. Office MS. Vide *ante*, p. 49.

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with much fervid eloquence and solid argument. Henry for a moment had seemed impressed, but such a vigorous proceeding was of course entirely beyond his strength, and he had sunk back into his effeminate languor so soon as the bold bishop's back was turned.[1]

The Béarnese had naturally conceived but little hope that such a scheme would be carried into effect; but he assured Calvart, that nothing could give him greater delight than to mount and ride in such a cause.[2]

"Notwithstanding," said the Béarnese, "that the villanous intentions of the Guises are becoming plainer and plainer, and that they are obviously supplied with Spanish dollars, I shall send a special envoy to the most Christian King, and, although 'tis somewhat late, implore him to throw his weight into the scale, in order to redeem your country from its misery. Meantime be of good heart, and defend as you have done your hearths, your liberty, and the honour of God."[3]

He advised the States unhesitatingly to continue their confidence in the French King, and to keep him informed of their plans and movements; expressing the opinion that these very intrigues of the Guise party would soon justify or even force Henry III. openly to assist the Netherlands.

So far, at that very moment, was so sharp a politician as the Béarnese from suspecting the secret schemes of Henry of Valois. Calvart urged the King of Navarre to assist the States at that moment with some slight subsidy. Antwerp was in such imminent danger as to fill the hearts of all true patriots with dismay; and a timely succour, even if a slender one, might be of inestimable value.

Henry expressed profound regret that his own means were so limited, and his own position so dangerous, as to make it difficult for him to manifest in broad daylight the full affection which he bore the Provinces.

[1] De Thou, ix. 298, *seq.*

[2] 'Rapport fait par le Sieur Calvart, aiant esté envoie vers le roy de Navarre de la part des deputez des Etats Generaux chez le roy tres Chretien,' 11 Juin, 1585. (Hague Archives, MS.

[3] MS. Report of Calvart, before cited.

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"To my sorrow," said he, "your proposition is made in the midst of such dark and stormy weather, that those who have clearest sight are unable to see to what issue these troubles of France are tending." [1]

Nevertheless, with much generosity and manliness, he promised Calvart to send two thousand soldiers, at his own charges, to the Provinces without delay; and authorised that envoy to consult with his agent at the court of the French King, in order to obtain the royal permission for the troops to cross the frontier.[2]

The crownless and almost houseless King had thus, at a single interview, and in exchange for nothing but good wishes, granted what the most Christian monarch of France had refused, after months of negociation, and with sovereignty as the purchase-money. The envoy, well pleased, sped as swiftly as possible to Paris; but, as may easily be imagined, Henry of Valois forbade the movement contemplated by Henry of Navarre.

"His Majesty," said Villeroy, secretary of state, "sees no occasion, in so weighty a business, thus suddenly to change his mind; the less so, because he hopes to be able ere long to smooth over these troubles which have begun in France. Should the King either openly or secretly assist the Netherlands or allow them to be assisted, 'twould be a reason for all the Catholics now sustaining his Majesty's party to go over to the Guise faction. The Provinces must remain firm, and make no pacification with the enemy. Meantime the Queen of England is the only one to whom God has given means to afford you succour. One of these days, when the proper time comes, his Majesty will assist her in affording you relief." [3]

Calvart, after this conference with the King of Navarre, and subsequently with the government, entertained a lingering hope that the French King meant to assist the Provinces. "I know well who is the author of these troubles," said the

[1] MS. Report of Calvart before cited.

[2] Ibid.

[3] It will be observed that the envoys here speak of Villeroy as mentioning the Guises by name.

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unhappy monarch, who never once mentioned the name of Guise in all those conferences, "but, if God grant me life, I will give him as good as he sends, and make him rue his conduct."[1]

They were not aware after how many strange vacillations Henry was one day to wreak this threatened vengeance. As for Navarre, he remained upon the watch, good humoured as ever, more merry and hopeful as the tempest grew blacker; manifesting the most frank and friendly sentiments towards the Provinces, and writing to Queen Elizabeth in the chivalrous style so dear to the heart of that sovereign, that he desired nothing better than to be her "servant and captain-general against the common enemy."

But, indeed, the French King was not so well informed as he imagined himself to be of the authorship of these troubles. Mucio, upon whose head he thus threatened vengeance, was but the instrument. The concealed hand that was directing all these odious intrigues, and lighting these flames of civil war which were so long to make France a scene of desolation, was that of the industrious letter-writer in the Escorial. That which Henry of Navarre shrewdly suspected, when he talked of the Spanish dollars in the Balafré's pocket, that which was dimly visible to the Bishop of Acqs when he told Henry III. that the "Tagus had emptied itself into the Seine and Loire, and that the gold of Mexico was flowing into the royal cabinet,"[2] was much more certain than they supposed.

Philip, in truth, was neglecting his own most pressing interests that he might direct all his energies towards entertaining civil war in France. That France should remain internally at peace was contrary to all his plans. He had therefore long kept Guise and his brother, the Cardinal de Lorraine, in his pay, and he had been spending large sums of money to bribe many of the most considerable functionaries in the kingdom.

[1] "Wiert oock verwittigt dat Z. M. luttel dagen voer myn vertreck, wesende onder zyne familieren seyde—je scay bien qui est l'autheur de ces troubles, mais si Dieu me donne vie, je luy rendrai pareille et l'en ferai repentir." (MS. Report of Calvart.)

[2] De Thou, *ubi sup.*

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The most important enterprises in the Netherlands were allowed to languish, that these subterranean operations of the "prudent" monarch of Spain should be pushed forward. The most brilliant and original genius that Philip had the good fortune to have at his disposal, the genius of Alexander Farnese, was cramped and irritated almost to madness, by the fetters imposed upon it, by the sluggish yet obstinate nature of him it was bound to obey. Farnese was at that moment engaged in a most arduous military undertaking, that famous siege of Antwerp, the details of which will be related in future chapters, yet he was never furnished with men or money enough to ensure success to a much more ordinary operation. His complaints, subdued but intense, fell almost unheeded on his master's ear. He had not "ten dollars at his command," his cavalry horses were all dead of hunger or had been eaten by their riders, who were starving to death themselves, his army had dwindled to a "handful," yet he still held on to his purpose, in spite of famine, the desperate efforts of indefatigable enemies, and all the perils and privations of a deadly winter. He, too, was kept for a long time in profound ignorance of Philip's designs.

Meantime, while the Spanish soldiers were starving in Flanders, Philip's dollars were employed by Mucio and his adherents in enlisting troops in Switzerland and Germany, in order to carry on the civil war in France. The French king was held systematically up to ridicule or detestation in every village-pulpit in his own kingdom, while the sister of Mucio, the Duchess of Montpensier, carried the scissors at her girdle, with which she threatened to provide Henry with a third crown, in addition to those of France and Poland, which he had disgraced—the coronal tonsure of a monk. The convent should be, it was intimated, the eventual fate of the modern Childeric, but meantime it was more important than ever to supersede the ultimate pretensions of Henry of Navarre. To prevent that heretic of heretics, who was not to be bought with Spanish gold, from ever reigning, was the first object of Philip and Mucio.

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Accordingly, on the last day of the year 1584, a secret treaty had been signed at Joinville between Henry of Guise and his brother the Duc de Mayenne, holding the proxies of their brother the Cardinal and those of their uncles, Aumale and Elbeuf, on the one part, and John Baptist Tassis and Commander Moreo, on the other, as representatives of Philip.[1] This transaction,—sufficiently well known now to the most superficial student of history,—was a profound mystery then, so far as regarded the action of the Spanish king. It was not a secret, however, that the papistical party did not intend that the Bearnese prince should ever come to the throne, and the matter of the succession was discussed, precisely as if the throne had been vacant.

It was decided that Charles, paternal uncle to Henry of Navarre, commonly called the Cardinal Bourbon, should be considered successor to the crown, in place of Henry, whose claim was forfeited by heresy. Moreover, a great deal of superfluous money and learning was expended in ordering some elaborate legal arguments to be prepared by venal jurisconsults, proving not only that the uncle ought to succeed before the nephew, but that neither the one nor the other had any claim to succeed at all. The pen having thus been employed to do the work which the sword alone could accomplish, the poor old Cardinal was now formally established by the Guise faction as presumptive heir to the crown.[2]

A man of straw, a superannuated court-dangler, a credulous trifler, but an earnest Papist as his brother Antony had been, sixty-six years old, and feeble beyond his years, who, his life long, had never achieved one manly action, and had now one foot in the grave; this was the puppet placed in the saddle to run a tilt against the Bearnese, the man with foot ever in the stirrup, with sword rarely in its sheath.

The contracting parties at Joinville agreed that the Cardinal should succeed on the death of the reigning king, and that no heretic should ever ascend the throne, or hold the meanest

[1] Perefixe, 58, 59; De Thou, ix. 272.

[2] De Thou, ix. 262, *seq.*

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office in the kingdom. They agreed further that all heretics should be "exterminated" without distinction throughout France and the Netherlands. In order to procure the necessary reforms among the clergy, the council of Trent was to be fully carried into effect. Philip pledged himself to furnish at least fifty thousand crowns monthly, for the advancement of this Holy League, as it was denominated, and as much more as should prove necessary. The sums advanced were to be repaid by the Cardinal on his succeeding to the throne. All the great officers of the crown, lords and gentlemen, cities, chapters, and universities, all Catholics, in short, in the kingdom, were deemed to be included in the league. If any foreign Catholic prince desired to enter the union, he should be admitted with the consent of both parties. Neither his Catholic majesty nor the confederated princes should treat with the most Christian King, either directly or indirectly. The compact was to remain strictly secret—one copy of it being sent to Philip, while the other was to be retained by Cardinal Bourbon and his fellow leaguers.[1]

And now—in accordance with this program—Philip proceeded stealthily and industriously to further the schemes of Mucio, to the exclusion of more urgent business. Noiseless and secret himself, and delighting in nothing so much as to glide, as it were, throughout Europe, wrapped in the mantle of invisibility, he was perpetually provoked by the noise, the bombast, and the bustle, which his less prudent confederates permitted themselves. While Philip for a long time hesitated to confide the secret of the League to Parma, whom it most imported to understand these schemes of his master, the confederates were openly boasting of the assistance which they were to derive from Parma's coöperation. Even when the Prince had at last been informed as to the state of affairs, he stoutly denied the facts of which the leaguers made their vaunt; thus giving to Mucio and his friends a lesson in dissimulation.[2]

[1] Perefixe; De Thou, *ubi sup.*; Motteren, xii. 221, *seq.* Le Petit, xiv. 508, *seq.*

[2] 'Malpierre à Henry III.,' 27 Av. 1585. 'Brienne MS.' "Et luy (Prince de Parme) donne à entendre que les

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"Things have now arrived at a point," wrote Philip to Tassis, 15th March, 1585, "that this matter of the League cannot and ought not to be concealed from those who have a right to know it. Therefore you must speak clearly to the Prince of Parma, informing him of the whole scheme, and enjoining the utmost secrecy. You must concert with him as to the best means of rendering aid to this cause, after having apprised him of the points which regarded him, and also that of the security of Cardinal de Bourbon, in case of necessity."[1]

The Prince was anything but pleased, in the midst of his anxiety and his almost superhuman labour in the Antwerp siege, to be distracted, impoverished, and weakened, in order to carry out these schemes against France; but he kept the secret manfully.

To Malpierre, the French envoy in Brussels—for there was the closest diplomatic communication between Henry III. and Philip, while each was tampering with the rebellious subjects of the other—to Malpierre Parma flatly contradicted all complicity on the part of the Spanish King or himself with the Holy League, of which he knew Philip to be the originator and the chief.

"If I complain to the Prince of Parma," said the envoy, "of the companies going from Flanders to assist the League, he will make me no other reply than that which the President has done—that there is nothing at all in it—until they are fairly arrived in France. The President (Richardot) said that if the Catholic King belonged to the League, as they insinuate, his Majesty would declare the fact openly."[2]

And a few days later, the Prince himself averred, as Malpierre had anticipated, that "as to any intention on the part of himself or his Catholic Majesty, to send succour to the League, according to the boast of these gentlemen, he had never thought of such a thing, nor had received any order on

seigneurs de la dicte ligue se faisoient fortz d'avoir secours de deçá—à quoi il m'a respondu que jamais le d' Seign. Roy Catholique ne le feroit, et s'ils en faisoient courir le bruit, ce estoit pour donner plus d'appuy à leurs affaires," &c.

[1] 'Philip II. to J. B. Tassis,' 15 March, 1585. 'Archivo de Simancas,' MS.

[2] 'Malpierre à De Crosne,' 27 Av. 1585, 'Brienne MS.'

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the subject from his master. If the King intended to do anything of the kind, he would do it openly. He protested that he had never seen anything, or known anything of the League."[1]

Here was a man who knew how to keep a secret, and who had no scruples in the matter of dissimulation, however enraged he might be at seeing men and money diverted from his own masterly combinations in order to carry out these schemes of his master.

Mucio, on the contrary, was imprudent and inclined to boast. His contempt for Henry III. made him blind to the dangers to be apprehended from Henry of Navarre. He did little, but talked a great deal.

Philip was very anxious that the work should be done both secretly and thoroughly. "Let the business be finished before Saint John's day," said he to Tassis, when sending fifty thousand dollars for the use of the brothers Guise. "Tell Iniquez to warn them not to be sluggish. Let them not begin in a lukewarm manner, but promise them plenty of assistance from me, if they conduct themselves properly. Let them beware of wavering, or of falling into plans of conciliation. If they do their duty, I will do mine."[2]

But the Guise faction moved slowly despite of Philip's secret promptings. The truth is, that the means proposed by the Spanish monarch were ludicrously inadequate to his plans, and it was idle to suppose that the world was to be turned upside down for his benefit, at the very low price which he was prepared to pay.

Nothing less than to exterminate all the heretics in Christendom, to place himself on the thrones of France and of England, and to extinguish the last spark of rebellion in the Netherlands, was his secret thought, and yet it was very difficult to get fifty thousand dollars from him from month to month. Procrastinating and indolent himself, he was for ever rebuking the torpid movements of the Guises.

"Let Mucio set his game well at the outset," said he; "let

[1] 'Malpierre à Henry III.,' 23 Mai, 1585. 'Brienne MS.'

[2] 'Philip II. to Tassis.' MS. before cited.

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him lay the axe to the root of the tree, for to be wasting time fruitlessly is sharpening the knife for himself." [1]

This was almost prophetic. When after so much talking and tampering, there began to be recrimination among the leaguers, Philip was very angry with his subordinate.

"Here is Mucio," said he, "trying to throw the blame of all the difficulties, which have arisen, upon us. Not hastening, not keeping his secret, letting the execution of the enterprise grow cold, and lending an ear to suggestions about peace, without being sure of its conclusion, he has turned his followers into cowards, discredited his cause, and given the King of France opportunity to strengthen his force and improve his party. These are all very palpable things. I am willing to continue my friendship for them, but not, if, while they accept it, they permit themselves to complain, instead of manifesting gratitude." [2]

On the whole, however, the affairs of the League seemed prosperous. There was doubtless too much display among the confederates, but there was a growing uneasiness among the royalists. Cardinal Bourbon, discarding his ecclesiastical robes and scarlet stockings, paraded himself daily in public, clothed in military costume, with all the airs of royalty. Many persons thought him mad. On the other hand, Epergnon, the haughty minion-in-chief, who governed Henry III. and insulted all the world, was becoming almost polite.

"The progress of the League," said Busbecq, "is teaching the Duc d' Epergnon manners. 'Tis a youth of such insolence, that without uncovering he would talk with men of

[1] "Lo que sobre todo conviene acordar y encargar a Mucio es que procure poner bien su juego á los principios, con acudir á la raiz porque lo contrario y dejarse consumir del tiempo debalde, podra ser su cuchillo." (Ibid.)

[2] "Mucio nos quiere hazer aca cargo de todas las dificultades en que alla se han metido, al principio par apresurarse y no guardar bien su segreto, y despues por haver se resfriado la execucion de la empresa, y dado oydos a la paz, que tras no les poder ser segura la conclusion della, solo el trato ha acobardado los animos de los que le siguieran, desacreditando su causa y dando lugar a que el Rey de Francia pudiesse recoger sus fuerzas y mejorar su partido, que son todas tan palpables—mas no les aceptando que estan quexosos en lugar de obligados." Philip II. to Mendoza, 9 July, 1585. 'Archivo de Simancas MS.' In the 'Archives de l'Empire at Paris.' A. 56. 30.

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royal descent, while they were bareheaded. 'Tis a common jest now that he has found out where his hat is."[1]

Thus, for a long time, a network of secret political combinations had been stretching itself over Christendom. There were great movements of troops throughout Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, slowly concentrating themselves upon France; yet, on the whole, the great mass of the populations, the men and women who were to pay, to fight, to starve, to be trampled upon, to be outraged, to be plundered, to be burned out of houses and home, to bleed, and to die, were merely ignorant, gaping spectators. That there was something very grave in prospect was obvious, but exactly what was impending they knew no more than the generation yet unborn. Very noiselessly had the patient manager who sat in the Escorial been making preparations for that European tragedy in which most of the actors had such fatal parts assigned them, and of which few of the spectators of its opening scenes were doomed to witness the conclusion. A shifting and glancing of lights, a vision of vanishing feet, a trampling and bustling of unseen crowds, movements of concealed machinery, a few incoherent words, much noise and confusion vague and incomprehensible, till at last the tinkling of a small bell, and a glimpse of the modest manager stealing away as the curtain was rising—such was the spectacle presented at Midsummer 1585.

And in truth the opening picture was effective. Sixteen black-robed, long-bearded Netherland envoys stalking away, discomfited and indignant upon one side; Catharine de' Medici on the other, regarding them with a sneer, painfully contorted into a pathetic smile; Henry the King, robed in a sack of penitence, trembling and hesitating, leaning on the arm of Epergnon, but quailing even under the protection of that mighty swordsman; Mucio, careering, truncheon in hand, in full panoply, upon his war-horse, waving forward a mingled mass of German lanzknechts, Swiss musketeers, and Lorraine pikemen; the redoubtable Don Bernardino de Mendoza, in

[1] Busbecqui. 'Epist. ad Rud.' 25 April, 1585, p. 154.

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front, frowning and ferocious, with his drawn sword in his hand; Elizabeth of England, in the back ground, with the white-bearded Burghley and the monastic Walsingham, all surveying the scene with eyes of deepest meaning; and, somewhat aside, but in full view, silent, calm, and imperturbably good-humoured, the bold Béarnese, standing with a mischievous but prophetic smile glittering through his blue eyes and curly beard—thus grouped were the personages of the drama in the introductory scenes.

The course of public events which succeeded the departure of the Netherland deputies is sufficiently well known. The secret negotiations and intrigues, however, by which those external facts were preceded or accompanied rest mainly in dusty archives, and it was therefore necessary to dwell somewhat at length upon them in the preceding pages.

The treaty of Joinville was signed on the last day of the year 1584.

We have seen the real nature of the interview of Ambassador Mendoza with Henry III. and his mother, which took place early in January, 1585. Immediately after that conference, Don Bernardino betook himself to the Duke of Guise, and lost no time in stimulating his confederate to prompt but secret action.

The Netherland envoys had their last audience on the 18th March, and their departure and disappointment was the signal for the general exhibition and explosion. The great civil war began, and the man who refused to annex the Netherlands to the French kingdom soon ceased to be regarded as a king.

On the 31st March, the heir presumptive, just manufactured by the Guises, sent forth his manifesto. Cardinal Bourbon, by this document, declared that for twenty-four years past no proper measures had been taken to extirpate the heresy by which France was infested. There was no natural heir to the King. Those who claimed to succeed at his death had deprived themselves, by heresy, of their rights. Should they gain their ends, the ancient religion would be

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abolished throughout the kingdom, as it had been in England, and Catholics be subjected to the same frightful tortures which they were experiencing there. New men, admitted to the confidence of the crown, clothed with the highest honours, and laden with enormous emoluments, had excluded the ancient and honoured functionaries of the state, who had been obliged to sell out their offices to these upstart successors. These new favourites had seized the finances of the kingdom, all of which were now collected into the private coffers of the King, and shared by him with his courtiers. The people were groaning under new taxes invented every day, yet they knew nothing of the distribution of the public treasure, while the King himself was so impoverished as to be unable to discharge his daily debts. Meantime these new advisers of the crown had renewed to the Protestants of the kingdom the religious privileges of which they had so justly been deprived, yet the religious peace which had followed had not brought with it the promised diminution of the popular burthens. Never had the nation been so heavily taxed or reduced to such profound misery. For these reasons, he, Cardinal Bourbon, with other princes of the blood, peers, gentlemen, cities, and universities, had solemnly bound themselves by oath to extirpate heresy down to the last root, and to save the people from the dreadful load under which they were languishing. It was for this that they had taken up arms, and till that purpose was accomplished they would never lay them down.

The paper concluded with the hope that his Majesty would not take these warlike demonstrations amiss; and a copy of the document was placed in the royal hands.[1]

It was very obvious to the most superficial observer, that the manifesto was directed almost as much against the reigning sovereign as against Henry of Navarre. The adherents of the Guise faction, and especially certain theologians in their employ, had taken very bold grounds upon the relations between king and subjects, and had made the public very

[1] De Thou, ix. 284, *seq.*

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familiar with their doctrines. It was a duty, they said, "to depose a prince who did not discharge his duty. Authority ill regulated was robbery, and it was as absurd to call him a king who knew not how to govern, as it was to take a blind man for a guide, or to believe that a statue could influence the movements of living men."[1]

Yet to the faction, inspired by such rebellious sentiments, and which was thundering in his face such tremendous denunciations, the unhappy Henry could not find a single royal or manly word of reply. He threw himself on his knees, when, if ever, he should have assumed an attitude of command. He answered the insolence of the men, who were parading their contempt for his authority, by humble excuses and supplications for pardon. He threw his crown in the dust before their feet, as if such humility would induce them to place it again upon his head. He abandoned the minions who had been his pride, his joy, and his defence, and deprecated, with an abject whimper, all responsibility for the unmeasured ambition and the insatiable rapacity of a few private individuals. He conjured the party-leaders, who had hurled defiance in his face, to lay down their arms, and promised that they should find in his wisdom and bounty more than all the advantages which they were seeking to obtain by war.[2]

Henry of Navarre answered in a different strain. The gauntlet had at last been thrown down to him, and he came forward to take it up; not insolently nor carelessly, but with the cold courtesy of a Christian knight and valiant gentleman. He denied the charge of heresy. He avowed detestation of all doctrines contrary to the Word of God, to the decrees of the Fathers of the Church, or condemned by the Councils. The errors and abuses which had from time to time crept into the church, had long demanded, in the opinion of all pious persons, some measures of reform. After many bloody wars, no better remedy had been discovered to arrest the cause of these dire religious troubles, whether in France or Germany, than to permit all men to obey the dictates of their own con-

[1] Perefixe, 58. [2] De Thou, ix. 288.

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science. The Protestants had thus obtained in France many edicts by which the peace of the kingdom had been secured. He could not himself be denounced as a heretic, for he had always held himself ready to receive instruction, and to be set right where he had erred. To call him "relapsed" was an outrage. Were it true, he were indeed unworthy of the crown, but the world knew that his change at the Massacre of St. Bartholomew had been made under duresse, and that he had returned to the reformed faith when he had recovered his liberty. Religious toleration had been the object of his life. In what the tyranny of the popes and the violence of the Spaniards had left him of his kingdom of Navarre, Catholics and Protestants enjoyed a perfect religious liberty. No man had the right, therefore, to denounce him as an enemy of the church, or a disturber of the public repose, for he had ever been willing to accept all propositions of peace which left the rights of conscience protected.

He was a Frenchman, a prince of France, a living member of the kingdom, feeling with its pains, and bleeding with its wounds. They who denounced him were alien to France, factitious portions of her body, feeling no suffering, even should she be consuming with living fire. The Leaguers were the friends and the servants of the Spaniards, while he had been born the enemy, and with too good reason, of the whole Spanish race.

"Let the name of Papist and of Huguenot," he said, "be heard no more among us. Those terms were buried in the edict of peace. Let us speak only of Frenchmen and of Spaniards. It is the counter-league which we must all unite to form, the natural union of the head with all its members."

Finally, to save the shedding of so much innocent blood, to spare all the countless miseries of civil war, he implored the royal permission to terminate this quarrel in person, by single combat with the Duke of Guise, one to one, two to two, or in as large a number as might be desired, and upon any spot within or without the kingdom that should be assigned. "The Duke of Guise," said Henry of Navarre,

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"cannot but accept my challenge as an honour, coming as it does from a prince infinitely his superior in rank; and thus, may God defend the right."

This paper, drawn up by the illustrious Duplessis-Mornay, who was to have been the second of the King of Navarre in the proposed duel, was signed 10 June 1585.[1]

The unfortunate Henry III., not so dull as to doubt that the true object of the Guise party was to reduce him to insignificance, and to open their own way to the throne, was too impotent of purpose to follow the dictates which his wisest counsellors urged and his own reason approved. His choice had lain between open hostility with his Spanish enemy and a more terrible combat with that implacable foe wearing the mask of friendship. He had refused to annex to his crown the rich and powerful Netherlands, from dread of a foreign war; and he was now about to accept for himself and kingdom all the horrors of a civil contest, in which his avowed antagonist was the first captain of the age, and his nominal allies the stipendiaries of Philip II.

Villeroy, his prime minister, and Catharine de' Medici, his mother, had both devoted him to disgrace and ruin. The deputies from the Netherlands had been dismissed, and now, notwithstanding the festivities and exuberant demonstrations of friendship with which the Earl of Derby's splendid embassy had been greeted, it became necessary to bind Henry hand and foot to the conspirators, who had sworn the destruction of that Queen, as well as his own, and the extirpation of heresy and heretics in every realm of Christendom.

On the 9th June the league demanded a royal decree, forbidding the practice of all religion but the Roman Catholic, on pain of death. In vain had the clear-sighted Bishop of Acqs uttered his eloquent warnings. Despite such timely counsels, which he was capable at once of appreciating and of neglecting, Henry followed slavishly the advice of those whom

[1] Declaration du Roy de Navarre contre les calomnies de la Ligue. In Duplessis-Mornay, 'Mémoires et Correspondance,' ed. 1824, vol. iii. 94 *seq.* De Thou, ix. 320, *seq.*

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he knew in his heart to be his foes, and authorised the great conspiracy against Elizabeth, against Protestantism, and against himself.

On the 5th June Villeroy had expressed a wish for a very secret interview with Mendoza, on the subject of the invasion of England.

"It needed not this overture," said that magniloquent Spaniard, "to engender in a person of my talents, and with the heart of a Mendoza, venom enough for vengeance. I could not more desire than I did already to assist in so holy a work; nor could I aspire to greater honour than would be gained in uniting those crowns (of France and Spain) in strict friendship, for the purpose of extirpating heresy throughout Europe, and of chastising the Queen of England—whose abominations I am never likely to forget, having had them so long before my eyes—and of satisfying my just resentment for the injuries she has inflicted on myself. It was on this subject," continued the ambassador, "that Monsieur de Villeroy wished a secret interview with me, pledging himself—if your Majesty would deign to unite yourself with this King, and to aid him with your forces—to a successful result." [1]

Mendoza accordingly expressed a willingness to meet the ingenuous Secretary of State—who had so recently been assisting at the banquets and rejoicings with Lord Derby and his companions, which had so much enlivened the French capital—and assured him that his most Catholic Majesty would be only too glad to draw closer the bonds of friendship

[1] "La abertura que estos reyes me havian hecho . . . . no havia de engendrar en una persona de mis prendas y coraçon de un Mendoza veneno para procurar venganças, y no antes desseo de ayudar obra tan santa, pues que me podria redundar mayor honra que de otra ninguna, siendo instrumento para unir estas coronas con firme amistad, debaxo de lo qual pudiesse extirpar las heregias de Europa, dando privilegio a esto, con castigar a la reyna de Ingaltierra, cuyas abominaciones creya que yo no tendria olvidadas, como persona que las havia tenido tantos años adelante los ojos, y causa de justo resentimiento por lo que havia hecho a la propria mia. Sobre esta materia dessara el Señor Villeroy veno secretamente conmigo, y entender suyo, me asegurara, si V. Md. holgaria de ayudar con sus fuerças y juntarse con este rey, para el efeto." Don Bernᵈⁱⁿᵒ de Mendoza a Su Caᶜᵃ R .Magᵈ. (de çifrada), Paris, 7 June, 1585. Arch. de Simancas, in the 'Archives de l'Empire' at Paris, B. 56. 220. 223, MS.

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with the most Christian King, for the service of God and the glory of his Church.

The next day the envoy and the Secretary of State met, very secretly, in the house of the Signor Gondi. Villeroy commenced his harangue by an allusion to the current opinion, that Mendoza had arrived in France with a torch in his hand, to light the fires of civil war in that kingdom, as he had recently done in England.[1]

"I do not believe," replied Mendoza, "that discreet and prudent persons in France attribute my actions to any such motives. As for the ignorant people of the kingdom, they do not appal me, although they evidently imagine that I have imbibed, during my residence in England, something of the spirit of the enchanter Merlin, that, by signs and cabalistic words alone, I am thought capable of producing such commotions."[2]

After this preliminary flourish the envoy proceeded to complain bitterly of the most Christian King and his mother, who, after the propositions which they had made him, when on his way to Spain, had, since his return, become so very cold and dry towards him.[3] And on this theme he enlarged for some time.

Villeroy replied, by complaining, in his turn, about the dealings of the most Catholic King, with the leaguers and the rebels of France; and Mendoza rejoined by an intimation that harping upon past grievances and suspicions was hardly the way to bring about harmony in present matters.

Struck with the justice of this remark, the French Secretary of State entered at once upon business. He made a very long speech[4] upon the tyranny which "that Englishwoman"

[1] "Con el acha en la mano para emprender fuego de guerra civil, como havia hecho an Ingaltierra." MS. just cited, 7 June, 1585.

[2] "Y que los ignorantes de francia no me espantarian, imaginandose haverse me pegado del tiempo que estuve en Ingaltierra algo del spiritu de Merlin, para haçer, con signos y palabras, semejantes commociones." (Ibid.)

[3] "Havellos hallado tan frios y secos." (Ibid.)

[4] "Respondio me que era bien proponiendo me con grande arenga, la tirannia con que procedia contra los catolicos agora de nuevo la de Ingaltierra, offensas que havia hecho a V.

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was anew inflicting upon the Catholics in her kingdom, upon the offences which she had committed against the King of Spain, and against the King of France and his brothers, and upon the aliment which she had been yielding to the civil war in the Netherlands and in France for so many years. He then said that if Mendoza would declare with sincerity, and "without any of the duplicity of a minister"—that Philip would league himself with Henry for the purpose of invading England, in order to reduce the three kingdoms to the Catholic faith, and to place their crowns on the head of the Queen of Scotland, to whom they of right belonged; then that the King, his master, was most ready to join in so holy an enterprise. He begged Mendoza to say with what number of troops the invasion could be made; whether Philip could send any from Flanders or from Spain; how many it would be well to send from France, and under what chieftain; in what manner it would be best to communicate with his most Catholic Majesty; whether it were desirable to despatch a secret envoy to him, and of what quality such agent ought to be. He also observed that the most Christian King could not himself speak to Mendoza on the subject before having communicated the matter to the Queen-Mother, but expressed a wish that a special carrier might be forthwith despatched to Spain; for he might be sure that, on an affair of such weight, he would not have permitted himself to reveal the secret wishes of his master, except by his commands.[1]

Mendoza replied, by enlarging with much enthusiasm on the facility with which England could be conquered by the combined power of France and Spain. If it were not a very difficult matter before—even with the jealousy between the

M^d., y el mismo a esto rey y hermanos, alimentando la guerra en los payses baxos, y en francia, por lungos años, que le dixesse, con llaneza y sin doblez de ministro, si V. M^d. holgaria de juntarse y ligarse con este rey, para hazer aquella impresa, reduziendo los tres reynos a la fee Cat^ca. Rom^na, y poniendo la corona a la de la reyna de Escozia, que era a la que de derecho le tocava, y lo que el rey su amo solo pretendia, que quedasse a quel reyno en la neutralidad, que hasta aqui, que por ser empresa tan santa, se prometia que V. M^d. no refusaria el assistir con sus fuerzas a ella, que de animo de su amo me asegurava de estar aparejedissimo para ello.' (MS. just cited, 7 June 1585.)

[1] Ibid.

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two crowns—how much less so, now that they could join their fleets and armies; now that the arming by the one prince would not inspire the other with suspicion; now that they would be certain of finding safe harbour in each other's kingdoms, in case of unfavourable weather and head-winds, and that they could arrange from what ports to sail, in what direction, and under what commanders. He disapproved, however, of sending a special messenger to Spain, on the ground of wishing to keep the matter entirely secret, but in reality—as he informed Philip—because he chose to keep the management in his own hands; because he could always let slip Mucio upon them, in case they should play him false; because he feared that the leaking out of the secret might discourage the Leaguers, and because he felt that the bolder and more lively were the Cardinal of Bourbon and his confederates, the stronger was the party of the King, his master, and the more intimidated and dispirited would be the mind and the forces of the most Christian King. "And this is precisely the point," said the diplomatist, "at which a minister of your Majesty should aim at this season."[1]

Thus the civil war in France—an indispensable part of Philip's policy—was to be maintained at all hazards; and although the ambassador was of opinion that the most Christian King was sincere in his proposition to invade England, it would never do to allow any interval of tranquillity to the wretched subjects of that Christian King.

"I cannot doubt," said Mendoza, "that the making of this proposal to me with so much warmth was the especial persuasion of God, who, hearing the groans of the Catholics of England, so cruelly afflicted, wished to force the French King and his minister to feel, in the necessity which surrounds them, that the offending Him, by impeding the grandeur of your Majesty, would be their total ruin, and that their only salvation is to unite in sincerity and truth with your Majesty for the destruction of the heretics."[2]

[1] "Que es, en lo que en esta sazon el ministro de V. Md. ha de traer puesta la mira." (MS. just cited, 7 June, 1585.)

[2] Ibid.

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Therefore, although—judging from the nature of the French—he might imagine that they were attempting to put him to sleep, Mendoza, on the whole, expressed a conviction that the King was in earnest, having arrived at the conclusion that he could only get rid of the Guise faction by sending them over to England. "Seeing that he cannot possibly eradicate the war from his kingdom," said the envoy, "because of the boldness with which the Leaguers maintain it, with the strong assistance of your Majesty, he has determined to embrace with much fervour, and without any deception at all, the enterprise against England, as the only remedy to quiet his own dominions. The subjugation of those three kingdoms, in order to restore them to their rightful owner, is a purpose so holy, just, and worthy of your Majesty, and one which you have had so constantly in view, that it is superfluous for me to enlarge upon the subject. Your Majesty knows that its effects will be the tranquillity and preservation of all your realms. The reasons for making the attempt, even without the aid of France, become demonstrations now that she is unanimously in favour of the scheme. The most Christian King is resolutely bent—so far as I can comprehend the intrigues of Villeroy—to carry out this project on the foundation of a treaty with the Guise party. It will not take much time, therefore, to put down the heretics here; nor will it consume much more to conquer England with the armies of two such powerful Princes.[1] The power of that island is of little moment, there being no disciplined forces to oppose us, even if they were all unanimous in its defence; how much less then, with so many Catholics to assist the invaders, seeing them so powerful. If your Majesty, on account of your Netherlands, is not afraid of putting arms into the hands of the Guise family in France, there need be less objection to

[1] "Los de Guisa, teniendo las armas en la mano, combaten a los hereges de aqui, que no puede ser mucho tiempo, y assi mismo, el que se consumira en reduzir a Ingaltierra con fuerças de tan poderosissimos principes, y la de la isla no de momento, pare podellos contrastor gente no exercitada, si bien estuviessen todos unanimos para defendarse, quanto mas, haviendo tantas Cat^cas que han de acudir á los estrangeros, viendo los tan poderosos." (MS. just cited, 7 June, 1585.)

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sending one of that house into England, particularly as you will send forces of your own into that kingdom, by the reduction of which the affairs of Flanders will be secured. "To effect the pacification of the Netherlands the sooner, it would be desirable to conquer England as early as October."[1]

Having thus sufficiently enlarged upon the sincerity of the French King and his prime minister, in their dark projects against a friendly power, and upon the ease with which that friendly power could be subjected, the ambassador begged for a reply from his royal master without delay. He would be careful, meantime, to keep the civil war alive in France—thus verifying the poetical portrait of himself, the truth of which he had just been so indignantly and rhetorically denying—but it was desirable that the French should believe that this civil war was not Philip's sole object. He concluded by drawing his master's attention to the sufferings of the English Catholics. "I cannot refrain," he said, "from placing before your eyes the terrible persecutions which the Catholics are suffering in England; the blood of the martyrs flowing in so many kinds of torments; the groans of the prisoners, of the widows and orphans; the general oppression and servitude, which is the greatest ever endured by a people of God, under any tyrant whatever. Your Majesty, into whose hands God is now pleased to place the means, so long desired, of extirpating and totally destroying the heresies of our time, can alone liberate them from their bondage."[2]

The picture of these kings, prime ministers, and ambassadors, thus plotting treason, stratagem, and massacre, is a dark and dreary one. The description of English sufferings for conscience' sake, under the Protestant Elizabeth, is even

[1] MS. just cited, 7 June, 1585.

[2] "Ante cuyos ojos no puedo dexar de anteponer en esta la terible persecucion que passan los Cat^cos en Ingalt^a, con mucha sangre de martires derremada con diversos generos de tormentos, los gemidos de los prisonieros, de los viudas y huerfanos, y opression general y servidumbre que es la mayor que ha parescido jamas pueblo de Dios, debaxo de ningun tirano, de cuya mano espera solo ser libertados por las de V. M^d. a quien Dios es servido de poner en las proprias la ocasion que tantos dias ha procurado para la extirpacion y total destruycion de les heregias de n.^ro tiempo, el sea servido de remediallos." (Ibid.)

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more painful; for it had unfortunately too much of truth, although as wilfully darkened and exaggerated as could be done by religious hatred and Spanish bombast. The Queen was surrounded by legions of deadly enemies. Spain, the Pope, the League, were united in one perpetual conspiracy against her; and they relied on the coöperation of those subjects of hers whom her own cruelty was converting into traitors.

We read with a shudder these gloomy secrets of conspiracy and wholesale murder, which make up the diplomatic history of the sixteenth century, and we cease to wonder that a woman, feeling herself so continually the mark at which all the tyrants and assassins of Europe were aiming—although not possessing perhaps the evidences of her peril so completely as they have been revealed to us—should come to consider every English Papist as a traitor and an assassin. It was unfortunate that she was not able to rise beyond the vile instincts of the age, and by a magnanimous and sublime toleration, to convert her secret enemies into loyal subjects.

And now Henry of Valois was to choose between league and counter-league, between Henry of Guise and Henry of Navarre, between France and Spain. The whole chivalry of Gascony and Guienne, the vast swarm of industrious and hardy Huguenot artisans, the Netherland rebels, the great English Queen, stood ready to support the cause of French nationality, and of all nationalities, against a threatening world-empire, of religious liberty against sacerdotal absolutism, and the crown of a King, whose only merit had hitherto been to acquiesce in a religious toleration dictated to him by others, against those who derided his authority and insulted his person. The bold knight-errant of Christendom, the champion to the utterance against Spain, stood there with lance in rest, and the King scarcely hesitated.

The League, gliding so long unheeded, now reared its crest in the very palace of France, and full in the monarch's face. With a single shudder the victim fell into its coils.

The choice was made. On the 18th of July the edict of

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Nemours was published, revoking all previous edicts by which religious peace had been secured. Death and confiscation of property were now proclaimed as the penalty of practising any religious rites save those of the Roman Catholic Church. Six months were allowed to the Nonconformists to put their affairs in order, after which they were to make public profession of the Catholic religion, with regular attendance upon its ceremonies, or else go into perpetual exile. To remain in France without abjuring heresy was thenceforth a mortal crime, to be expiated upon the gallows. As a matter of course, all Huguenots were instantaneously incapacitated from public office, the mixed chambers of justice were abolished, and the cautionary towns were to be restored. On the other hand, the Guise faction were to receive certain cities into their possession, as pledges that this sanguinary edict should be fulfilled.[1]

Thus did Henry III. abjectly kiss the hand which smote him. His mother, having since the death of Anjou no further interest in affecting to favour the Huguenots, had 15th July, 1585. arranged the basis of this treaty with the Spanish party. And now the unfortunate King had gone solemnly down to the Parliament of Paris, to be present at the registration of the edict. The counsellors and presidents were all assembled, and as they sat there in their crimson robes, they seemed, to the excited imagination of those who loved their country, like embodiments of the impending and most sanguinary tragedy. As the monarch left the parliament-house a faint cry of 'God save the King' was heard in the street. Henry hung his head, for it was long since that cry had met his ears, and he knew that it was a false and languid demonstration which had been paid for by the Leaguers.

And thus was the compact signed—an unequal compact. Madam League was on horseback, armed in proof, said a contemporary; the King was on foot, and dressed in a shirt of penitence.[2] The alliance was not an auspicious one. Not

[1] De Thou, ix. 328, *seq.*

[2] 'L'Estoile,' 186.

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peace, but a firebrand—*facem, non pacem*—had the King held forth to his subjects.[1]

When the news came to Henry of Navarre that the King had really promulgated this fatal edict, he remained for a time, with amazement and sorrow, leaning heavily upon a table, with his face in his right hand. When he raised his head again—so he afterwards asserted—one side of his moustachio had turned white.[2]

Meantime Gregory XIII., who had always refused to sanction the League, was dead, and Cardinal Peretti, under the
24th April, name of Sixtus V., now reigned in his place. Born
1585. of an illustrious house, as he said—for it was a house without a roof[3]—this monk of humble origin was of inordinate ambition. Feigning a humility which was but the cloak to his pride, he was in reality as grasping, self-seeking, and revengeful, as he seemed gentle and devout. It was inevitable that a pontiff of this character should seize the opportunity offered him to mimic Hildebrand, and to brandish on high the thunderbolts of the Church.

With a flaming prelude concerning the omnipotence delegated by Almighty God to St. Peter and his successors—an authority infinitely superior to all earthly powers—the decrees of which were irresistible alike by the highest and the meanest, and which hurled misguided princes from their thrones into the abyss, like children of Beelzebub, the Pope proceeded to fulminate his sentence of excommunication against those children of wrath, Henry of Navarre and Henry of Condé. They were denounced as heretics, relapsed, and enemies of
28th Aug., God. The King was declared dispossessed of his
1585. principality of Bearne, and of what remained to him of Navarre. He was stripped of all dignities, privileges, and property, and especially proclaimed incapable of ever ascending the throne of France.[4]

The Bearnese replied by a clever political squib. A terse

[1] "Guisiadis factum dum puto dicere pacem,
Pacem non possum dicere, dico facem."
L'Estoile, 137.

[2] Mathieu, anno 1585.

[3] De Thou, ix. 368, *seq.*

[4] De Thou, ix. 369. 'L'Estoile,' 190.

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and spirited paper found its way to Rome, and was soon affixed to the statutes of Pasquin and Marforio, and in other public places of that city, and even to the gates of the papal palace. Without going beyond his own doors, his Holiness had the opportunity of reading, to his profound amazement, that Mr. Sixtus, calling himself Pope, had foully and maliciously lied in calling the King of Navarre a heretic. This Henry offered to prove before any free council legitimately chosen. If the Pope refused to submit to such decision, he was himself no better than excommunicate and Antichrist, and the King of Navarre thereby declared mortal and perpetual war upon him. The ancient kings of France had known how to chastise the insolence of former popes, and he hoped, when he ascended the throne, to take vengeance on Mr. Sixtus for the insult thus offered to all the kings of Christendom—and so on, in a vein which showed the Bearnese to be a man rather amused than blasted by these papal fireworks.[1]

Sixtus V., though imperious, was far from being dull. He knew how to appreciate a man when he found one, and he rather admired the cheerful attitude maintained by Navarre, as he tossed back the thunderbolts. He often spoke afterwards of Henry with genuine admiration, and declared that in all the world he knew but two persons fit to wear a crown—Henry of Navarre and Elizabeth of England. "'Twas pity," he said, "that both should be heretics."[2]

And thus the fires of civil war had been lighted throughout Christendom, and the monarch of France had thrown himself head foremost into the flames.

[1] De Thou, ix. 376-378. Perefixe, 62, 63. 'L'Estoile,' 190. The last-named writer declares himself the author of this famous answer to the bull of Sixtus:

"Au susdit ecrit, fait par l'auteur des presens memoires, on a fait faire du palais de Paris un voyage à Rome, ou l'on l'a mis, signifié, et affiché, et l'a t on inseré aux recueils de ce tems, imprimes à la Rochelle, tant la vanité et curiosité de ce tems estoit grande."

[2] De Thou, Perefixe, *ubi sup.*

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CHAPTER V.

Position and Character of Farnese — Preparations for Antwerp Siege — Its Characteristics — Foresight of William the Silent — Sainte Aldegonde, the Burgomaster — Anarchy in Antwerp — Character of Sainte Aldegonde — Admiral Treslong — Justinus de Nassau — Hohenlo — Opposition to the Plan of Orange — Liefkenshoek — Head-Quarters of Parma at Kalloo — Difficulty of supplying the City — Results of not piercing the Dykes — Preliminaries of the Siege — Successes of the Spaniards — Energy of Farnese with Sword and Pen — His Correspondence with the Antwerpers — Progress of the Bridge — Impoverished Condition of Parma — Patriots attempt Bois-le-Duc — Their Misconduct — Failure of the Enterprise — The Scheldt Bridge completed — Description of the Structure — Position of Alexander and his Army — La Motte attempts in vain Ostend — Patriots gain Liefkenshoek — Projects of Gianibelli — Alarm on the Bridge — The Fire Ships — The Explosion — Its Results — Death of the Viscount of Ghent — Perpetual Anxiety of Farnese — Impoverished State of the Spaniards — Intended Attack of the Kowenstyn — Second Attack of the Kowenstyn — A Landing effected — A sharp Combat — The Dyke pierced — Rally of the Spaniards — Parma comes to the Rescue — Fierce Struggle on the Dyke — The Spaniards successful — Premature Triumph at Antwerp — Defeat of the Patriots — The Ship War's End — Despair of the Citizens — Sainte Aldegonde discouraged — His Critical Position — His Negotiations with the Enemy — Correspondence with Richardot — Commotion in the City — Interview of Marnix with Parma — Suspicious Conduct of Marnix — Deputation to the Prince — Oration of Marnix — Private Views of Parma — Capitulation of Antwerp — Mistakes of Marnix — Philip on the Religious Question — Triumphal Entrance of Alexander — Rebuilding of the Citadel — Gratification of Philip — Note on Sainte Aldegonde.

THE negotiations between France and the Netherlands have been massed, in order to present a connected and distinct view of the relative attitude of the different countries of Europe. The conferences and diplomatic protocolling had resulted in nothing positive; but it is very necessary for the reader to understand the negative effects of all this dissimulation and palace-politics upon the destiny of the new commonwealth, and upon Christendom at large. The League had now achieved a great triumph; the King of France had virtually abdicated, and it was now requisite for the King of Navarre, the Netherlands, and Queen Elizabeth, to draw

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more closely together than before, if the last hope of forming a counter-league were not to be abandoned. The next step in political combination was therefore a solemn embassy of the States-General to England. Before detailing those negotiations, however, it is proper to direct attention to the external public events which had been unrolling themselves in the Provinces, contemporaneously with the secret history which has been detailed in the preceding chapters.

By presenting in their natural groupings various distinct occurrences, rather than by detailing them in strict chronological order, a clearer view of the whole picture will be furnished than could be done by intermingling personages, transactions, and scenery, according to the arbitrary command of Time alone.

The Netherlands, by the death of Orange, had been left without a head. On the other hand, the Spanish party had never been so fortunate in their chief at any period since the destiny of the two nations had been blended with each other. Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, was a general and a politician, whose character had been steadily ripening since he came into the command of the country. He was now thirty-seven years of age—with the experience of a sexagenarian. No longer the impetuous, arbitrary, hot-headed youth, whose intelligence and courage hardly atoned for his insolent manner and stormy career, he had become pensive, modest, almost gentle. His genius was rapid in conception, patient in combination, fertile in expedients, adamantine in the endurance of suffering; for never did a heroic general and a noble army of veterans manifest more military virtue in the support of an infamous cause than did Parma and his handful of Italians and Spaniards. That which they considered to be their duty they performed. The work before them they did with all their might.

Alexander had vanquished the rebellion in the Celtic provinces, by the masterly diplomacy and liberal bribery which have been related in a former work. Artois, Hainault,

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Douay, Orchies, with the rich cities of Lille, Tournay, Valenciennes, Arras, and other important places, were now the property of Philip. These unhappy and misguided lands, however, were already reaping the reward of their treason. Beggared, trampled upon, plundered, despised, they were at once the prey of the Spaniards, and the cause that their sister-states, which still held out, were placed in more desperate condition than ever. They were also, even in their abject plight, made still more forlorn by the forays of Balagny, who continued in command of Cambray. Catharine de' Medici claimed that city as her property, by will of the Duke of Anjou.[1] A strange title—founded upon the treason and cowardice of her favourite son—but one which, for a time, was made good by the possession maintained by Balagny. That usurper meantime, with a shrewd eye to his own interests, pronounced the truce of Cambray, which was soon afterwards arranged, from year to year, by permission of Philip, as a "most excellent milch-cow;"[2] and he continued to fill his pails at the expense of the "reconciled" provinces, till they were thoroughly exhausted.

This large south-western section of the Netherlands being thus permanently re-annexed to the Spanish crown, while Holland, Zeeland, and the other provinces, already constituting the new Dutch republic, were more obstinate in their hatred of Philip than ever, there remained the rich and fertile territory of Flanders and Brabant as the great debateable land. Here were the royal and political capital, Brussels, the commercial capital, Antwerp, with Mechlin, Dendermonde, Vilvoorde, and other places of inferior importance, all to be struggled for to the death. With the subjection of this district the last bulwark between the new commonwealth and the old empire would be overthrown, and Spain and Holland would then meet face to face.

If there had ever been a time when every nerve in Pro-

[1] Strada, II. 295.

[2] Le Petit II. 499.

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testant Christendom should be strained to weld all those provinces together into one great commonwealth, as a bulwark for European liberty, rather than to allow them to be broken into stepping-stones, over which absolutism could stride across France and Holland into England, that moment had arrived. Every sacrifice should have been cheerfully made by all Netherlanders, the uttermost possible subsidies and auxiliaries should have been furnished by all the friends of civil and religious liberty in every land to save Flanders and Brabant from their impending fate.

No man felt more keenly the importance of the business in which he was engaged than Parma. He knew his work exactly, and he meant to execute it thoroughly. Antwerp was the hinge on which the fate of the whole country, perhaps of all Christendom, was to turn. "If we get Antwerp," said the Spanish soldiers—so frequently that the expression passed into a proverb—"you shall all go to mass with us; if you save Antwerp, we will all go to conventicle with you."

Alexander rose with the difficulty and responsibilty of his situation. His vivid, almost poetic intellect formed its schemes with perfect distinctness. Every episode in his great and, as he himself termed it, his "heroic enterprise," was traced out beforehand with the tranquil vision of creative genius; and he was prepared to convert his conceptions into reality, with the aid of an iron nature that never knew fatigue or fear.

But the obstacles were many. Alexander's master sat in his cabinet with his head full of Mucio, Don Antonio, and Queen Elizabeth; while Alexander himself was left neglected, almost forgotten. His army was shrinking to a nullity. The demands upon him were enormous, his finances delusive, almost exhausted. To drain an ocean dry he had nothing but a sieve. What was his position? He could bring into the field perhaps eight or ten thousand men over and above the necessary garrisons. He had before him Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin, Ghent, Dendermonde, and other powerful

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places, which he was to subjugate. Here was a problem not easy of solution. Given an army of eight thousand, more or less, to reduce therewith in the least possible time, half-a-dozen cities, each containing fifteen or twenty thousand men able to bear arms. To besiege these places in form was obviously a mere chimæra. Assault, battery, and surprises—these were all out of the question.

Yet Alexander was never more truly heroic than in this position of vast entanglement. Untiring, uncomplaining, thoughtful of others, prodigal of himself, generous, modest, brave; with so much intellect and so much devotion to what he considered his duty, he deserved to be a patriot and a champion of the right, rather than an instrument of despotism.

And thus he paused for a moment—with much work already accomplished, but his hardest life-task before him; still in the noon of manhood, a fine martial figure, standing, spear in hand, full in the sunlight, though all the scene around him was wrapped in gloom—a noble, commanding shape, entitled to the admiration which the energetic display of great powers, however unscrupulous, must always command. A dark, meridional physiognomy, a quick, alert, imposing head; jet black, close-clipped hair; a bold eagle's face, with full, bright, restless eye; a man rarely reposing, always ready, never alarmed; living in the saddle, with harness on his back—such was the Prince of Parma; matured and mellowed, but still unharmed by time.

The cities of Flanders and Brabant he determined to reduce by gaining command of the Scheldt. The five principal ones—Ghent, Dendermonde, Mechlin, Brussels, Antwerp, lie in a narrow circle, at distances from each other varying from five miles to thirty, and are all strung together by the great Netherland river or its tributaries. His plan was immensely furthered by the success of Balthasar Gerard, an ally whom Alexander had despised and distrusted, even while he employed him. The assassination of Orange was better to Parma than forty thousand men. A crowd of allies instantly started

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up for him, in the shape of treason, faintheartedness, envy, jealousy, insubordination, within the walls of every beleaguered city. Alexander knew well how to deal with those auxiliaries. Letters, artfully concocted, full of conciliation and of promise, were circulated in every council-room, in almost every house.

The surrender of Ghent—brought about by the governor's eloquence, aided by the golden arguments which he knew so well how to advance—had by the middle of September 19th Sept., put him in possession of West Flanders, with the 1584. important exception of the coast. Dendermonde capitulated at a still earlier day; while the fall of Brussels, which held out till many persons had been starved to death, was deferred till the 10th March of the following year, and that of Mechlin till midsummer.[1]

The details of the military or political operations, by which the reduction of most of these places was effected, possess but little interest. The siege of Antwerp, however, was one of the most striking events of the age; and although the change in military tactics and the progress of science may have rendered this leaguer of less technical importance than it possessed in the sixteenth century, yet the illustration that it affords of the splendid abilities of Parma, of the most cultivated mode of warfare in use at that period, and of the internal politics by which the country was then regulated, make it necessary to dwell upon the details of an episode which must ever possess enduring interest.

It is agreeable to reflect, too, that the fame of the general is not polluted with the wholesale butchery, which has stained the reputation of other Spanish commanders so indelibly. There was no killing for the mere love of slaughter. With but few exceptions, there was no murder in cold blood; and the many lives that were laid down upon those watery dykes were sacrificed at least in bold, open combat; in a contest, the ruling spirits of which were patriotism, or at least honour.

[1] Meteren, xii. 217, *seq.*

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It is instructive, too, to observe the diligence and accuracy with which the best lights of the age were brought to bear upon the great problem which Parma had undertaken to solve. All the science then at command was applied both by the Prince and by his burgher antagonists to the advancement of their ends. Hydrostatics, hydraulics, engineering, navigation, gunnery, pyrotechnics, mining, geometry, were summoned as broadly, vigorously, and intelligently to the destruction or preservation of a trembling city, as they have ever been, in more commercial days, to advance a financial or manufacturing purpose. Land converted into water, and water into land, castles built upon the breast of rapid streams, rivers turned from their beds and taught new courses; the distant ocean driven across ancient bulwarks, mines dug below the sea, and canals made to percolate obscene morasses—which the red hand of war, by the very act, converted into blooming gardens—a mighty stream bridged and mastered in the very teeth of winter, floating ice-bergs, ocean-tides, and an alert and desperate foe, ever ready with fleets and armies and batteries—such were the materials of which the great spectacle was composed; a spectacle which enchained the attention of Europe for seven months, and on the result of which, it was thought, depended the fate of all the Netherlands, and perhaps of all Christendom.

Antwerp, then the commercial centre of the Netherlands and of Europe, stands upon the Scheldt. The river, flowing straight, broad, and full along the verge of the city, subtends the arc into which the place arranges itself as it falls back from the shore. Two thousand ships of the largest capacity then known might easily find room in its ample harbours. The stream, nearly half a mile in width, and sixty feet in depth, with a tidal rise and fall of eleven feet, moves, for a few miles, in a broad and steady current between the provinces of Brabant and Flanders. Then, dividing itself into many ample estuaries, and gathering up the level isles of Zeeland into its bosom, it seems to sweep out with them into the northern ocean. Here, at the junction of the river and the

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sea, lay the perpetual hope of Antwerp, for in all these creeks and currents swarmed the fleets of the Zeelanders, that hardy and amphibious race, with which few soldiers or mariners could successfully contend, on land or water.

Even from the beginning of the year 1584 Parma had been from time to time threatening Antwerp. The victim instinctively felt that its enemy was poising and hovering over head, although he still delayed to strike. Early in the summer Sainte Aldegonde, Recorder Martini, and other official personages, were at Delft, upon the occasion of the christening-ceremonies of Frederic Henry, youngest child of Orange. The Prince, at that moment, was aware of the plans of Parma, and held a long conversation with his friends upon the measures which he desired to see immediately undertaken. Unmindful of his usual hospitality, he insisted that these gentlemen should immediately leave for Antwerp. Alexander Farnese, he assured them, had taken the firm determination to possess himself of that place, without further delay. He had privately signified his purpose of laying the axe at once to the root of the tree, believing that with the fall of the commercial capital the infant confederacy of the United States would fall likewise. In order to accomplish this object, he would forthwith attempt to make himself master of the banks of the Scheldt, and would even throw a bridge across the stream, if his plans were not instantly circumvented.[1]

William of Orange then briefly indicated his plan; adding that he had no fears for the result; and assuring his friends, who expressed much anxiety on the subject, that if Parma really did attempt the siege of Antwerp it should be his ruin. The plan was perfectly simple. The city stood upon a river. It was practicable, although extremely hazardous, for the enemy to bridge that river, and by so doing ultimately to reduce the place. But the ocean could not be bridged; and it was quite possible to convert Antwerp, for a season, into an ocean-port. Standing alone upon an island, with the sea

[1] Bor, II. xix. 466.

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flowing around it, and with full and free marine communication with Zeeland and Holland, it might safely bid defiance to the land-forces, even of so great a commander as Parma. To the furtherance of this great measure of defence, it was necessary to destroy certain bulwarks, the chief of which was called the Blaw-garen Dyke; and Sainte Aldegonde was therefore requested to return to the city, in order to cause this task to be executed without delay.[1] 10th June, 1584.

Nothing could be more judicious than this advice. The low lands along the Scheldt were protected against marine encroachments, and the river itself was confined to its bed, by a magnificent system of dykes, which extended along its edge towards the ocean, in parallel lines. Other barriers of a similar nature ran in oblique directions, through the wide open pasture lands, which they maintained in green fertility, against the ever-threatening sea. The Blaw-garen, to which the prince mainly alluded, was connected with the great dyke upon the right bank of the Scheldt. Between this and the city, another bulwark called the Kowenstyn Dyke, crossed the country at right angles to the river, and joined the other two at a point, not very far from Lillo, where the States had a strong fortress.[2]

The country in this neighbourhood was low, spongy, full of creeks, small meres, and the old bed of the Scheldt. Orange, therefore, made it very clear, that by piercing the great dyke just described, such a vast body of water would be made to pour over the land as to submerge the Kowenstyn also, the only other obstacle in the passage of fleets from Zeeland to Antwerp. The city would then be connected with the sea and its islands, by so vast an expanse of navigable water, that any attempt on Parma's part to cut off supplies and succour would be hopeless. Antwerp would laugh the idea of famine to scorn; and although this immunity would be purchased by the sacrifice of a large amount of agricultural territory the price so paid was but a slender one, when the

[1] Bor, *ubi sup.* Meteren, xii. 216-18.
[2] Bor, Meteren, *ubi sup.* Hoofd Vervolgh, 4, *seq.*

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existence of the capital, and with it perhaps of the whole confederacy was at stake.[1]

Sainte Aldegonde and Martini suggested, that, as there would be some opposition to the measure proposed, it might be as well to make a similar attempt on the Flemish side, in preference, by breaking through the dykes in the neighbourhood of Saftingen. Orange replied, by demonstrating that the land in the region which he had indicated was of a character to ensure success, while in the other direction there were certain very unfavourable circumstances which rendered the issue doubtful.[2] The result was destined to prove the sagacity of the Prince, for it will be shown in the sequel, that the Saftingen plan, afterwards really carried out, was rather advantageous than detrimental to the enemy's projects.

Sainte Aldegonde, accordingly, yielded to the arguments and entreaties of his friend, and repaired without delay to Antwerp.

The advice of William the Silent—as will soon be related—was not acted upon; and, within a few weeks after it had been given, he was in his grave. Nowhere was his loss more severely felt than in Antwerp. It seemed, said a contemporary, that with his death had died all authority.[3] The Prince was the only head which the many-membered body of that very democratic city ever spontaneously obeyed. Antwerp was a small republic—in time of peace intelligently and successfully administered—which in the season of a great foreign war, amid plagues, tumults, famine, and internal rebellion, required the firm hand and the clear brain of a single chief. That brain and hand had been possessed by Orange alone.

Before his death he had desired that Sainte Aldegonde should accept the office of burgomaster of the city. Nominally, the position was not so elevated as were many of the posts which that distinguished patriot had filled. In reality, it was as responsible and arduous a place as could be offered

[1] Bor, Meteren, *ubi sup.* Hoofd Vervolgh, 4 *seq.*
[2] Ibid. [3] Reyd, iv. 59.

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to any man's acceptance throughout the country. Sainte Aldegonde consented, not without some reluctance. He felt that there was odium to be incurred; he knew that much would be expected of him, and that his means would be limited. His powers would be liable to a constant and various restraint. His measures were sure to be the subject of perpetual cavil. If the city were besieged, there were nearly one hundred thousand mouths to feed, and nearly one hundred thousand tongues to dispute about furnishing the food.

For the government of Antwerp had been degenerating from a well-organised municipal republicanism into anarchy. The clashing of the various bodies exercising power had become incessant and intolerable.[1] The burgomaster was charged with the chief executive authority, both for peace and war. Nevertheless he had but a single vote in the board of magistrates, where a majority decided. Moreover, he could not always attend the sessions, because he was also member of the council of Brabant. Important measures might therefore be decided by the magistracy, not only against his judgment, but without his knowledge. Then there was a variety of boards or colleges, all arrogating concurrent—which in truth was conflicting—authority. There was the board of militia-colonels, which claimed great powers. Here, too, the burgomaster was nominally the chief, but he might be voted down by a majority, and of course was often absent. Then there were sixteen captains who came into the colonels' sessions whenever they liked, and had their word to say upon all subjects broached. If they were refused a hearing, they were backed by eighty other captains, who were ready at any moment to carry every disputed point before the "broad-council."

There were a college of ward-masters, a college of select men, a college of deacons, a college of ammunition, of fortification, of ship-building, all claiming equal authority, and all wrangling among themselves; and there was a college of "peace-makers," who wrangled more than all the rest together.

[1] Meteren, xii. 218. Guicciardini, *in voce*.

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Once a week there was a session of the board or general council. Dire was the hissing and confusion, as the hydra heads of the multitudinous government were laid together. Heads of colleges, presidents of chambers, militia-chieftains, magistrates, ward-masters, deans of fishmongers, of tailors, gardeners, butchers, all met together pell-mell; and there was no predominant authority. This was not a convenient working machinery for a city threatened with a siege by the first captain of the age. Moreover there was a deficiency of regular troops. The burgher-militia were well trained and courageous, but not distinguished for their docility. There was also a regiment of English under Colonel Morgan, a soldier of great experience, and much respected; but, as Stephen Le Sieur said, "this force, unless seconded with more, was but a breakfast for the enemy." Unfortunately, too, the insubordination, which was so ripe in the city, seemed to affect these auxiliaries. A mutiny broke out among the English troops. Many deserted to Parma, some escaped to England, and it was not until Morgan had beheaded Captain Lee and Captain Powell,[1] that discipline could be restored.

And into this scene of wild and deafening confusion came Philip de Marnix, Lord of Sainte Aldegonde.

There were few more brilliant characters than he in all Christendom. He was a man of a most rare and versatile genius. Educated in Geneva at the very feet of Calvin, he had drunk, like mother's milk, the strong and bitter waters of the stern reformer's creed; but he had in after life attempted, although hardly with success, to lift himself to the height of a general religious toleration. He had also been trained in the severe and thorough literary culture which characterised that rigid school. He was a scholar, ripe and rare; no holiday trifler in the gardens of learning. He spoke and wrote Latin like his native tongue. He could compose poignant Greek epigrams. He was so familiar with Hebrew, that he had rendered the Psalms of David out of the original into flowing Flemish verse, for the use of the

[1] Meteren, xii. 218.

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reformed churches. That he possessed the modern tongues of civilized Europe, Spanish, Italian, French, and German, was a matter of course. He was a profound jurisconsult, capable of holding debate against all competitors upon any point of theory or practice of law, civil, municipal, international. He was a learned theologian, and had often proved himself a match for the doctors, bishops, or rabbin of Europe, in highest argument of dogma, creed, or tradition. He was a practised diplomatist, constantly employed in delicate and difficult negotiations by William the Silent, who ever admired his genius, cherished his friendship, and relied upon his character. He was an eloquent orator, whose memorable harangue, beyond all his other efforts, at the diet of Worms, had made the German princes hang their heads with shame, when, taking a broad and philosophical view of the Netherland matter, he had shown that it was the great question of Europe; that Nether Germany was all Germany; that Protestantism could not be unravelled into shreds; that there was but one cause in Christendom—that of absolutism against national liberty, Papacy against the reform; and that the seventeen Provinces were to be assisted in building themselves into an eternal barrier against Spain, or that the "burning mark of shame would be branded upon the forehead of Germany;" that the war, in short, was to be met by her on the threshold, or else that it would come to seek her at home—a prophecy which the horrible Thirty Years' War was in after time most signally to verify.

He was a poet of vigour and originality, for he had accomplished what has been achieved by few; he had composed a national hymn, whose strophes, as soon as heard, struck a chord in every Netherland heart, and for three centuries long have rung like a clarion wherever the Netherland tongue is spoken. "Wilhelmus van Nassouwe," regarded simply as a literary composition, has many of the qualities which an ode demands; an electrical touch upon the sentiments, a throb of patriotism, sympathetic tenderness, a dash of indignation, with rhythmical harmony and graceful expression; and thus

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it has rung from millions of lips, from generation to generation.

He was a soldier, courageous, untiring, prompt in action, useful in council, and had distinguished himself in many a hard-fought field. Taken prisoner in the sanguinary skirmish at Maaslandssluys, he had been confined a year, and, for more than three months, had never laid his head, as he declared, upon the pillow without commending his soul as for the last time to his Maker, expecting daily the order for his immediate execution, and escaping his doom only because William the Silent proclaimed that the proudest head among the Spanish prisoners should fall to avenge his death; so that he was ultimately exchanged against the veteran Mondragon.

From the incipient stages of the revolt he had been foremost among the patriots. He was supposed to be the author of the famous "Compromise of the Nobles," that earliest and most conspicuous of the state-papers of the republic, and of many other important political documents; and he had contributed to general literature many works of European celebrity, of which the 'Roman Bee-Hive' was the most universally known.

Scholar, theologian, diplomatist, swordsman, orator, poet, pamphleteer, he had genius for all things, and was eminent in all. He was even famous for his dancing, and had composed an intelligent and philosophical treatise upon the value of that amusement, as an agent of civilisation, and as a counteractor of the grosser pleasures of the table to which Upper and Nether Germans were too much addicted.

Of ancient Savoyard extraction, and something of a southern nature, he had been born in Brussels, and was national to the heart's core.

A man of interesting, sympathetic presence; of a physiognomy where many of the attaching and attractive qualities of his nature revealed themselves; with crisp curling hair, surmounting a tall, expansive forehead—full of benevolence, idealism, and quick perceptions; broad, brown, melancholy

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eyes, overflowing with tenderness; a lean and haggard cheek, a rugged Flemish nose; a thin flexible mouth; a slender moustache, and a peaked and meagre beard; so appeared Sainte Aldegonde in the forty-seventh year of his age, when he came to command in Antwerp.

Yet after all—many-sided, accomplished, courageous, energetic, as he was—it may be doubted whether he was the man for the hour or the post. He was too impressionable; he had too much of the temperament of genius. Without being fickle, he had, besides his versatility of intellect, a character which had much facility in turning; not, indeed, in the breeze of self-interest, but because he seemed placed in so high and clear an atmosphere of thought that he was often acted upon and swayed by subtle and invisible influences. At any rate his conduct was sometimes inexplicable. He had been strangely fascinated by the ignoble Duke of Anjou; and, in the sequel, it will be found that he was destined to experience other magnetic or magical impulses, which were once thought suspicious, and have remained mysterious even to the present day.

He was imaginative. He was capable of broad and boundless hopes. He was sometimes prone to deep despair. His nature was exquisitely tempered; too fine and polished a blade to be wielded among those hydra-heads by which he was now surrounded; and for which the stunning sledge-hammer of arbitrary force was sometimes necessary.

He was perhaps deficient in that gift, which no training and no culture can bestow, and which comes from above alone by birth-right divine—that which men willingly call master, authority; the effluence which came so naturally from the tranquil eyes of William the Silent.

Nevertheless, Sainte Aldegonde was prepared to do his best, and all his best was to be tasked to the utmost. His position was rendered still more difficult by the unruly nature of some of his co-ordinates.

"From the first day to the last," said one who lived in

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Antwerp during the siege, "the mistakes committed in the city were incredible."[1] It had long been obvious that a siege was contemplated by Parma. A liberal sum of money had been voted by the States-General, of which Holland and Zeeland contributed a very large proportion (two hundred thousand florins); the city itself voted another large subsidy, and an order was issued to purchase at once and import into the city at least a year's supply of every kind of provisions of life and munitions of war.[2]

William de Blois, Lord of Treslong, Admiral of Holland and Zeeland, was requested to carry out this order, and superintend the victualling of Antwerp. But Treslong at once became troublesome. He was one of the old "beggars of the sea," a leader in the wild band who had taken possession of the Brill, in the teeth of Alva, and so laid the foundation of the republic. An impetuous noble, of wealthy family, high connections, and refractory temper—a daring sailor, ever ready for any rash adventure, but possessed of a very moderate share of prudence or administrative ability, he fell into loose and lawless courses on the death of Orange, whose firm hand was needed to control him. The French negociation had excited his profound disgust, and knowing Sainte Aldegonde to be heart and soul in favour of that alliance, he was in no haste whatever to carry out his orders with regard to Antwerp.[3] He had also an insignificant quarrel with President Meetkerk. The Prince of Parma—ever on the watch for such opportunities—was soon informed of the Admiral's discontent, and had long been acquainted with his turbulent character. Alexander at once began to inflame his jealousy and soothe his vanity by letters and messengers, urging upon him the propriety of reconciling himself with the King, and promising him large rewards and magnificent employments in the royal service. Even the splendid insignia of the Golden Fleece were dangled before his eyes. It is certain that the bold Hollander was not seduced by these visions, but there is

[1] Le Petit, II. 516. [2] Le Petit, II. 500. [3] Strado, II. 332, *seq.*

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no doubt that he listened to the voice of the tempter. He unquestionably neglected his duty. Week after week he remained at Ostend, sneering at the French and quaffing huge draughts in honour of Queen Elizabeth. At last, after much time had elapsed, he agreed to victual Antwerp if he could be furnished with thirty krom-stevens,—a peculiar kind of vessel, not to be found in Zeeland. The krom-stevens were sent to him from Holland. Then, hearing that his negligence had been censured by the States-General, he became more obstinate than ever, and went up and down proclaiming that if people made themselves disagreeable to him he would do that which should make all the women and children in the Netherlands shriek and tremble. What this nameless horror was to be he never divulged, but meantime he went down to Middelburg, and swore that not a boat-load of corn should go up to Antwerp until two members of the magistracy, whom he considered unpleasant, had been dismissed from their office. Wearied with all this bluster, and imbued with grave suspicion as to his motives, the States at last rose upon their High Admiral and threw him into prison. He was accused of many high crimes and misdemeanours, and, it was thought, would be tried for his life. He was suspected and even openly accused of having been tampered with by Spain, but there was at any rate a deficiency of proof.

"Treslong is apprehended," wrote Davison to Burghley, "and is charged to have been the cause that the fleet passed not up to Antwerp. He is suspected to have otherwise forgotten himself, but whether justly or not will appear by his trial. Meantime he is kept in the common prison of Middelburg, a treatment which it is thought they would not offer him if they had not somewhat of importance against him."[1]

He was subsequently released at the intercession of Queen Elizabeth, and passed some time in England. He was afterwards put upon trial, but no accuser appearing to sustain the charges against him, he was eventually released. He never received a command in the navy again, but the very rich

[1] Davison to Burghley and Walsingham, Feb. 28, 1585. S. P. Office MS.

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sinecures of Grand Falconer and Chief Forester of Holland were bestowed upon him, and he appears to have ended his days in peace and plenty.[1]

He was succeeded in the post of Admiral of Holland and Zeeland by Justinus de Nassau, natural son of William the Silent, a young man of much promise but of little experience.[2]

General Count Hohenlo, too, lieutenant for young Maurice, and virtual commander-in-chief of the States' forces, was apt to give much trouble. A German noble, of ancient descent and princely rank, brave to temerity, making a jest of danger, and riding into a foray as if to a merry-making; often furiously intoxicated, and always turbulent and uncertain; a handsome, dissipated cavalier, with long curls floating over his shoulders, an imposing aristocratic face, and a graceful, athletic figure, he needed some cool brain and steady hand to guide him—valuable as he was to fulfil any daring project—but was hardly willing to accept the authority of a burgomaster. While the young Maurice yet needed tutelage, while "the sapling was growing into the tree," Hohenlo was a dangerous chieftain and a most disorderly lieutenant.

With such municipal machinery and such coadjutors had Sainte Aldegonde to deal, while, meantime, the delusive French negociation was dragging its slow length along, and while Parma was noiselessly and patiently proceeding with his preparations.

The burgomaster—for Sainte Aldegonde, in whom vulgar ambition was not a foible, had refused the dignity and title of Margrave of Antwerp, which had been tendered him—had neglected no effort towards carrying into effect the advice of Orange, given almost with his latest breath. The manner in which that advice was received furnished a striking illustration of the defective machinery which has been pourtrayed.

Upon his return from Delft, Sainte Aldegonde had summoned a meeting of the magistracy of Antwerp. He laid

[1] Strada, II. 332, *seq.* Reyd, iv. 59. Bor. II. xx. 570-594. Wagenaar, viii. 84-87. Meteren, xii. 218.

[2] Ibid.

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June, 1584. before the board the information communicated by Orange as to Parma's intentions. He also explained the scheme proposed for their frustration, and urged the measures indicated with so much earnestness that his fellow-magistrates were convinced. The order was passed for piercing the Blauw-garen Dyke, and Sainte Aldegonde, with some engineers, was requested to view the locality, and to take order for the immediate fulfilment of the plan.[1]

Unfortunately there were many other boards in session besides that of the Schepens, many other motives at work besides those of patriotism. The guild of butchers held a meeting, so soon as the plan suggested was known, and resolved with all their strength to oppose its execution.

The butchers were indeed furious. Twelve thousand oxen grazed annually upon the pastures which were about to be submerged, and it was represented as unreasonable that all this good flesh and blood should be sacrificed. At a meeting of the magistrates on the following day, sixteen butchers, delegates from their guild, made their appearance, hoarse with indignation. They represented the vast damage which would be inflicted upon the estates of many private individuals by the proposed inundation, by this sudden conversion of teeming meadows, fertile farms, thriving homesteads, prolific orchards, into sandy desolation. Above all they depicted, in glowing colours and with natural pathos, the vast destruction of beef which was imminent, and they urged—with some show of reason—that if Parma were really about to reduce Antwerp by famine, his scheme certainly would not be obstructed by the premature annihilation of these wholesome supplies.[2]

That the Scheldt could be closed in any manner was, however, they said, a preposterous conception. That it could be bridged was the dream of a lunatic. Even if it were possible to construct a bridge, and probable that the Zeelanders and Antwerpers would look on with folded arms while the

[1] Bor. II. 467.

[2] Bor. II. 467, *seq.* Meteren, xii. 216-218, *seq.* Hoofd Vervolgh, 4, *seq.*

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work proceeded, the fabric, when completed, would be at the mercy of the ice-floods of the winter and the enormous power of the ocean-tides. The Prince of Orange himself, on a former occasion, when Antwerp was Spanish, had attempted to close the river with rafts, sunken piles, and other obstructions, but the whole had been swept away, like a dam of bulrushes, by the first descent of the ice-blocks of winter. It was witless to believe that Parma contemplated any such measure, and utterly monstrous to believe in its success.[1]

Thus far the butchers. Soon afterwards came sixteen colonels of militia, as representatives of their branch of the multiform government. These personages, attended by many officers of inferior degree, sustained the position of the butchers with many voluble and vehement arguments. Not the least convincing of their conclusions was the assurance that it would be idle for the authorities to attempt the destruction of the dyke, seeing that the municipal soldiery itself would prevent the measure by main force, at all hazards, and without regard to their own or others' lives.

The violence of this opposition, and the fear of a serious internecine conflict at so critical a juncture, proved fatal to the project. Much precious time was lost, and when at last the inhabitants of the city awoke from their delusion, it was to find that repentance, as usual, had come many hours too late.[2]

For Parma had been acting while his antagonists had been wrangling. He was hampered in his means, but he was assisted by what now seems the incredible supineness of the Netherlanders. Even Sainte Aldegonde did not believe in the possibility of erecting the bridge; not a man in Antwerp seemed to believe it. "The preparations," said one who lived in the city, "went on before our very noses, and every one was ridiculing the Spanish commander's folly."[3]

A very great error was, moreover, committed in abandoning Herenthals to the enemy. The city of Antwerp governed

[1] Bor. Meteren, Hoofd, *ubi sup.* Le Petit, II. 500, *seq.* [2] Ibid.
[3] Le Petit, II. 498, 499.

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Brabant, and it would have been far better for the authorities of the commercial capital to succour this small but important city, and, by so doing, to protract for a long time their own defence. Mondragon saw and rejoiced over the mistake. "Now 'tis easy to see that the Prince of Orange is dead," said the veteran, as he took possession, in the King's name, of the forsaken Herenthals.[1]

Early in the summer, Parma's operations had been, of necessity, desultory. He had sprinkled forts up and down the Scheldt, and had gradually been gaining control of the navigation upon that river. Thus Ghent and Dendermonde, Vilvoorde, Brussels, and Antwerp, had each been isolated, and all prevented from rendering mutual assistance. Below Antwerp, however, was to be the scene of the great struggle. Here, within nine miles of the city, were two forts belonging to the States, on opposite sides of the stream, Lillo and Liefkenshoek. It was important for the Spanish commander to gain possession of both, before commencing his contemplated bridge.

Unfortunately for the States, the fortifications of Liefkenshoek, on the Flemish side of the river, had not been entirely completed. Eight hundred men lay within it, under Colonel John Pettin of Arras, an old patriotic officer of much experience. Parma, after reconnoitring the place in person, despatched the famous Viscount of Ghent—now called Marquis of Roubaix and Richebourg—to carry it by assault. The Marquis sent one hundred men from his Walloon legion, under two officers, in whom he had confidence, to attempt a surprise, with orders, if not successful, to return without delay. They were successful. The one hundred gained entrance into the fort at a point where the defences had not been put into sufficient repair.

They were immediately followed by Richebourg, at the head of his regiment. The day was a fatal one. It was
10th July, 1584. the 10th July, and William of Orange was falling at Delft by the hand of Balthazar Gerard. Lief-

[1] Reyd, iv. 59.

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kenshoek was carried at a blow. Of the eight hundred patriots in the place, scarcely a man escaped. Four hundred were put to the sword, the others were hunted into the river, when nearly all were drowned. Of the royalists *a single man* was killed, and two or three more were wounded. "Our Lord was pleased," wrote Parma piously to Philip, that we "should cut the throats of four hundred of them in a single instant, and that a great many more should be killed upon the dykes; so that I believe very few to have escaped with life. We lost one man, besides two or three wounded."[1] A few were taken prisoners, and among them was the commander John Pettin. He was at once brought before Richebourg, who was standing in the presence of the Prince of Parma. The Marquis drew his sword, walked calmly up to the captured Colonel, and ran him through the body. Pettin fell dead upon the spot. The Prince was displeased. "Too much choler, Marquis, too much choler,"—said he reprovingly. "Troppa colera, Signor Marchese, é questa."[2] But Richebourg knew better. He had, while still Viscount of Ghent, carried on a year previously a parallel intrigue with the royalists and the patriots. The Prince of Parma had bid highest for his services, and had, accordingly, found him a most effectual instrument in completing the reduction of the Walloon Provinces. The Prince was not aware, however, that his brave but venal ally had, at the very same moment, been secretly treating with William of Orange; and as it so happened that Colonel Pettin had been the agent in the unsuccessful negotiation, it was possible that his duplicity would now be exposed.[3] The Marquis had, therefore, been prompt to place his old confederate in the condition wherein men tell no tales, and if contemporary chronicles did not bely him, it was not the first

[1] "Y fue nuestro Señor servido que entrassen con sola perdida de un muerto y 2 o 3 heridos, y que se degollasen hasta 400 hombres en el mismo instante, y que se matassen en los diques muchos—de manera que creo que han quedado pocos con vida." Parma to Philip II., 15 July, 1584. Archivo de Simancas MS. Compare Bor, II. 469, *seq.* Meteren, xii. 218vo. Strada, II. 304, *seq.*

[2] Meteren, xii. 218.

[3] Ibid.

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time that he had been guilty of such cold-blooded murder. The choler had not been superfluous.

The fortress of Lillo was garrisoned by the Antwerp volunteers, called the "Young Bachelors." Teligny, the brave son of the illustrious "Iron-armed" La Noue, commanded in chief: and he had, besides the militia, a company of French under Captain Gascoigne, and four hundred Scotchmen under Colonel Morgan—perhaps two thousand men in all.

Mondragon, hero of the famous submarine expeditions of Philipsland and Zierickzee, was ordered by Parma to take the place at every hazard. With five thousand men—a large proportion of the Spanish effective force at that moment—the veteran placed himself before the fort, taking possession of the beautiful country-house and farm of Lillo, where he planted his batteries, and commenced a regular cannonade. The place was stronger than Liefkenshoek, however, and Teligny thoroughly comprehended the importance of maintaining it for the States. Mondragon dug mines, and Teligny countermined. The Spanish daily cannonade was cheerfully responded to by the besieged, and by the time Mondragon had shot away fifty thousand pounds of powder, he found that he had made no impression upon the fortress, while the number of his troops had been diminishing with great rapidity. Mondragon was not so impetuous as he had been on many former occasions. He never ventured an assault. At last Teligny made a sortie at the head of a considerable force. A warm action succeeded, at the conclusion of which, without a decided advantage on either side, the sluice-gate in the fortress was opened, and the torrent of the Scheldt, swollen by a high tide, was suddenly poured upon the Spaniards. Assailed at once by the fire from the Lillo batteries, and by the waters of the river, they were forced to a rapid retreat. This they effected with great loss, but with signal courage, struggling breast high in the waves, and bearing off their field-pieces in their arms in the very face of the enemy.[1]

[1] Hoofd, Vervolgh, 7, 8. Strada, II. 304, *seq.* Bor., II. 469, *seq.* Meteren, xii. 218.

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Three weeks long Mondragon had been before Fort Lillo, and two thousand of his soldiers had been slain in the trenches. The attempt was now abandoned. Parma directed permanent batteries to be established at Lillo-house, at Oordam, and at other places along the river, and proceeded quietly with his carefully-matured plan for closing the river.[1]

His own camp was in the neighbourhood of the villages of Beveren, Kalloo, and Borght. Of the ten thousand foot and seventeen hundred horse, which composed at the moment his whole army, about one-half lay with him, while the remainder were with Count Peter Ernest Mansfeld, in the neighbourhood of Stabroek. Thus the Prince occupied a position on the left bank of the Scheldt, nearly opposite Antwerp, while Mansfeld was stationed upon the right bank, and ten miles farther down the river. From a point in the neighbourhood of Kalloo, Alexander intended to throw a fortified bridge to the opposite shore. When completed, all traffic up the river from Zeeland would be cut off; and as the country on the land-side, about Antwerp, had been now reduced, the city would be effectually isolated. If the Prince could hold his bridge until famine should break the resistance of the burghers, Antwerp would fall into his hands.

His head-quarters were at Kalloo, and this obscure spot soon underwent a strange transformation. A drowsy placid little village—with a modest parish spire peeping above a clump of poplars, and with half a dozen cottages, with storks'-nests on their roofs, sprinkled here and there among pastures and orchards—suddenly saw itself changed as it were into a thriving bustling town; for, saving the white tents which dotted the green turf in every direction, the aspect of the scene was, for a time, almost pacific. It was as if some great manufacturing enterprise had been set on foot, and the world had suddenly awoke to the hidden capabilities of the situation.

A great dockyard and arsenal suddenly revealed themselves—rising like an exhalation—where ship-builders, ar-

[1] Meteren, xii. 218.

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mourers, blacksmiths, joiners, carpenters, caulkers, gravers, were hard at work all day long. The din and hum of what seemed a peaceful industry were unceasing. From Kalloo, Parma dug a canal twelve miles long to a place called Steeken, hundreds of pioneers being kept constantly at work with pick and spade till it was completed. Through this artificial channel—so soon as Ghent and Dendermonde had fallen—came floats of timber, fleets of boats laden with provisions of life and munitions of death, building-materials, and every other requisite for the great undertaking, all to be disembarked at Kalloo. The object was a temporary and destructive one, but it remains a monument of the great general's energy and a useful public improvement. The amelioration of the fenny and barren soil, called the Waesland, is dated from that epoch; and the spot in Europe which is the most prolific, and which nourishes the largest proportion of inhabitants to the square mile, is precisely the long dreary swamp which the Prince thus drained for military purposes, and converted into a garden. Drusus and Corbulo, in the days of the Roman Empire, had done the same good service for their barbarian foes.

At Kalloo itself, all the shipwrights, cutlers, masons, brass-founders, rope-makers, anchor-forgers, sailors, boatmen, of Flanders and Brabant, with a herd of bakers, brewers, and butchers, were congregated by express order of Parma. In the little church itself the main workshop was established, and all day long, week after week, month after month, the sound of saw and hammer, adze and plane, the rattle of machinery, the cry of sentinels, the cheers of mariners, resounded, where but lately had been heard nothing save the drowsy homily and the devout hymn of rustic worship.[1]

Nevertheless the summer and autumn wore on, and still the bridge was hardly commenced. The navigation of the river—although impeded and rendered dangerous by the

[1] Hoofd, Bor. Meteren, *ubi sup.* Le Petit, II, 509, *seq.* Reyd, iv. 58, 59. Strada, II. 321, *seq.* V. d. Kampen, I. 482. Bentivoglio, 'Guerra di Fiandra,' P. II. L. III.

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forts which Parma held along the banks—was still open; and, so long as the price of corn in Antwerp remained three or four times as high as the sum for which it could be purchased in Holland and Zeeland, there were plenty of dare-devil skippers ready to bring cargoes. Fleets of fly-boats, convoyed by armed vessels, were perpetually running the gauntlet. Sharp actions on shore between the forts of the patriots and those of Parma, which were all intermingled promiscuously along the banks, and amphibious and most bloody encounters on ship-board, dyke, and in the stream itself, between the wild Zeelanders and the fierce pikemen of Italy and Spain, were of repeated occurrence. Many a lagging craft fell into the enemy's hands, when, as a matter of course, the men, women, and children, on board, were horribly mutilated by the Spaniards, and were then sent drifting in their boat with the tide—their arms, legs, and ears lopped off—up to the city, in order that the dangerous nature of this provision-trade might be fully illustrated.[1]

Yet that traffic still went on. It would have continued until Antwerp had been victualled for more than a year, had not the city authorities, in the plentitude of their wisdom, thought proper to issue orders for its regulation. On the 25th October a census was taken, when the number of persons inside the walls was found to be ninety thousand. For this population it was estimated that 300,000 veertels, or about 900,000 bushels of corn, would be required annually.[2] The grain was coming in very fast, notwithstanding the perilous nature of the trade; for wheat could be bought in Holland for fifty florins the last, or about fifteen pence sterling the bushel, while it was worth five or six florins the veertel, or about four shillings the bushel, in Antwerp.[3]

25th Oct., 1584.

The magistrates now committed a folly more stupendous than it seemed possible for human creatures, under such cir-

1 "Bien est vray qu'il en arrivait *journellement* aucunes qui amenoient des hommes et des femmes, les uns tuez, les autres sans bras, ny jambes, mais tout cela n'empeschoit point le passage pourtant," &c. Le Petit, iv, 500. The historian was in Antwerp during the siege.

2 Bor, III. 500.

3 Meteren, Bor, *ubi sup.*

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cumstances, to compass. They established a maximum upon corn.[1] The skippers who had run their cargoes through the gauntlet, all the way from Flushing to Antwerp, found on their arrival, that, instead of being rewarded, according to the natural laws of demand and supply, they were required to exchange their wheat, rye, butter, and beef, against the exact sum which the Board of Schepens thought proper to consider a reasonable remuneration. Moreover, in order to prevent the accumulation of provisions in private magazines, it was enacted, that all consumers of grain should be compelled to make their purchases directly from the ships.[2] These two measures were almost as fatal as the preservation of the Blaw-garen Dyke, in the interest of the butchers. Winter and famine were staring the city in the face, and the maximum now stood sentinel against the gate, to prevent the admission of food. The traffic ceased without a struggle. Parma himself could not have better arranged the blockade.

Meantime a vast and almost general inundation had taken place. The aspect of the country for many miles around was strange and desolate. The sluices had been opened in the neighbourhood of Saftingen, on the Flemish side, so that all the way from Hulst the waters were out, and flowed nearly to the gates of Antwerp. A wide and shallow sea rolled over the fertile plains, while church-steeples, the tops of lofty trees, and here and there the turrets of a castle, scarcely lifted themselves above the black waters; the peasants' houses, the granges, whole rural villages, having entirely disappeared. The high grounds of Doel, of Kalloo, and Beveren, where Alexander was established, remained out of reach of the flood. Far below, on the opposite side of the river, other sluices had been opened, and the sea had burst over the wide, level plain. The villages of Wilmerdonk, Orderen, Ekeren, were changed to islands in the ocean, while all the other hamlets, for miles around, were utterly submerged.[3]

[1] Reyd, iv. 59. Bor, Meteren, *ubi sup.* [2] Reyd, Bor, Meteren.
[3] Bor, Meteren, Hoofd, Le Petit, Reyd, *ubi sup.*

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Still, however, the Blaw-garen Dyke and its companion the Kowenstyn remained obstinately above the waters, forming a present and more fatal obstruction to the communication between Antwerp and Zeeland than would be furnished even by the threatened and secretly-advancing bridge across the Scheldt. Had Orange's prudent advice been taken, the city had been safe. Over the prostrate dykes, whose destruction he had so warmly urged, the ocean would have rolled quite to the gates of Antwerp, and it would have been as easy to bridge the North Sea as to control the free navigation of the patriots over so wide a surface.

When it was too late, the butchers, and colonels, and captains, became penitent enough. An order was passed, by acclamation, in November, to do what Orange had recommended in June. It was decreed that the Blaw-garen and the Kowenstyn should be pierced.[1] Alas, the hour had long gone by. Alexander of Parma was not the man to undertake the construction of a bridge across the river, at a vast expense, and at the same time to permit the destruction of the already existing barrier. There had been a time for such a deed. The Seigneur de Kowenstyn, who had a castle and manor on and near the dyke which bore his name, had repeatedly urged upon the Antwerp magistracy the propriety of piercing this bulwark, even after their refusal to destroy the outer barrier. Sainte Aldegonde, who vehemently urged the measure, protested that his hair had stood on end, when he found, after repeated entreaty, that the project was rejected.[2] The Seigneur de Kowenstyn, disgusted and indignant, forswore his patriotism, and went over to Parma.[3] The dyke fell into the hands of the enemy. And now from Stabroek, where old Mansfeld lay with his army, all the way across the flooded country, ran the great bulwark, strengthened with new palisade-work and block-houses, bristling with Spanish cannon, pike, and arque-

[1] Bor, II. 500.
[2] Mertens en Torp. Geschiedenis van Antwerpen, v. 206. Papebrochii, 'Annales Antwerpienses,' iv. 100, *seq.*
[3] Bor, Meteren. Mertens en Torp, *ubi sup.*

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bus, even to the bank of the Scheldt, in the immediate vicinity of Fort Lillo. At the angle of its junction with the main dyke of the river's bank, a strong fortress called Holy Cross (Santa Cruz) had been constructed. That fortress and the whole line of the Kowenstyn were held in the iron grip of Mondragon. To wrench it from him would be no child's play. Five new strong redoubts upon the dyke, and five or six thousand Spaniards established there, made the enterprise more formidable than it would have been in June. It had been better to sacrifice the twelve thousand oxen. Twelve thousand Hollanders might now be slaughtered, and still the dyke remain above the waves.

Here was the key to the fate of Antwerp.

On the other hand, the opening of the Saftingen Sluice had done Parma's work for him. Even there, too, Orange had been prophetic. Kalloo was high and dry, but Alexander had experienced some difficulty in bringing a fleet of thirty vessels, laden with cannon and other valuable materials, from Ghent along the Scheldt, into his encampment, because it was necessary for them, before reaching their destination, to pass in front of Antwerp. The inundation, together with a rupture in the Dyke of Borght, furnished him with a watery road, over which his fleet completely avoided the city, and came in triumph to Kalloo.[1]

Sainte Aldegonde, much provoked by this masterly movement on the part of Parma, had followed the little squadron closely with some armed vessels from the city. A sharp action had succeeded, in which the burgomaster, not being properly sustained by the Zeeland ships on which he relied, had been defeated. Admiral Jacob Jacobzoon behaved with so little spirit on the occasion that he acquired with the Antwerp populace the name of "Run-away Jacob," "Koppen gaet loppen;" and Sainte Aldegonde declared, that, but for his cowardice, the fleet of Parma would have fallen into their hands. The burgomaster himself narrowly escaped becoming

[1] Meteren, xii. 218. Bor, II. 501.

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a prisoner, and owed his safety only to the swiftness of his barge, which was called the 'Flying Devil.'[1]

The patriots, in order to counteract similar enterprises in future, now erected a sconce, which they called Fort Teligny, upon the ruptured dyke of Borght, directly in front of the Borght blockhouse, belonging to the Spaniards, and just opposite Fort Hoboken. Here, in this narrow passage, close under the walls of Antwerp, where friends and foes were brought closely, face to face, was the scene of many a sanguinary skirmish, from the commencement of the siege until its close.[2]

Still the bridge was believed to be a mere fable, a chimæra. Parma, men said, had become a lunatic from pride. It was as easy to make the Netherlands submit to the yoke of the Inquisition as to put a bridle on the Scheldt. Its depth, breadth, the ice-floods of a northern winter, the neighbourhood of the Zeeland fleets, the activity of the Antwerp authorities, all were pledges that the attempt would be signally frustrated.[3]

And they should have been pledges—more than enough. Unfortunately, however, there was dissension within, and no chieftain in the field, no sage in the council, of sufficient authority to sustain the whole burthen of the war, and to direct all the energies of the commonwealth. Orange was dead. His son, one day to become the most illustrious military commander in Europe, was a boy of seventeen, nominally captain-general, but in reality but a youthful apprentice to his art. Hohenlo was wild, wilful, and obstinate. Young William Lewis Nassau, already a soldier of marked abilities, was fully occupied in Friesland, where he was stadholder, and where he had quite enough to do in making head against the Spanish governor and general, the veteran Verdugo. Military operations against Zutphen distracted the attention of the States, which should have been fixed upon Antwerp.

[1] Haraei, 'Ann. Tum. Belg.,' III. 369. Bor, II. 501. Meteren, xii. 218, *seq.*

[2] Ibid.

[3] Strada, II. 312, 313. Reyd, iv. 58, 59.

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Admiral Treslong, as we have seen, was refractory, the cause of great delinquency on the part of the fleets, and of infinite disaster to the commonwealth. More than all, the French negotiation was betraying the States into indolence and hesitation; and creating a schism between the leading politicians of the country. Several thousand French troops, under Monsieur d'Allaynes, were daily expected, but never arrived; and thus, while English and French partisans were plotting and counter-plotting, while a delusive diplomacy was usurping the place of lansquenettes and gun-boats—the only possible agents at that moment to preserve Antwerp—the bridge of Parma was slowly advancing. Before the winter had closed in, the preparatory palisades had been finished.

Between Kalloo and Ordam, upon the opposite side, a sand-bar had been discovered in the river's bed, which diminished the depth of the stream, and rendered the pile-driving comparatively easy. The breadth of the Scheldt at this passage was twenty-four hundred feet; its depth, sixty feet. Upon the Flemish side, near Kalloo, a strong fort was erected, called Saint Mary, in honour of the blessed Virgin, to whom the whole siege of Antwerp had been dedicated from the beginning. On the opposite bank was a similar fort, named Philip, for the King. From each of these two points, thus fortified, a framework of heavy timber, supported upon huge piles, had been carried so far into the stream on either side that the distance between the ends had at last been reduced to thirteen hundred feet. The breadth of the roadway—formed of strong sleepers firmly bound together—was twelve feet, along which block-houses of great thickness were placed to defend the whole against assault.[1]

Thus far the work had been comparatively easy. To bridge the remaining open portion of the river, however, where its current was deepest and strongest, and where the action of tide, tempest, and icebergs, would be most formidable, seemed a desperate undertaking; for as the enterprise advanced, this

[1] Bor, II. 501, *seq.* Meteren, xii. 218, *seq.* Strada, II. 313, *seq.* Bentivoglio, P. II. L. III. 288, *seq.*

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narrow open space became the scene of daily amphibious encounters between the soldiers and sailors of Parma and the forces of the States. Unfortunately for the patriots, it was only skirmishing. Had a strong, concerted attack, in large force, from Holland and Zeeland below and from the city above, been agreed upon, there was hardly a period, until very late in the winter, when it might not have had the best chances of success. With a vigorous commander against him, Parma, weak in men, and at his wits' end for money, might, in a few hours, have seen the labour of several months hopelessly annihilated. On the other hand, the Prince was ably seconded by his lieutenant, Marquis Richebourg, to whom had been delegated the immediate superintendence of the bridge-building in its minutest details. He was never idle. Audacious, indefatigable, ubiquitous, he at least atoned by energy and brilliant courage for his famous treason of the preceding year, while his striking and now rapidly approaching doom upon the very scene of his present labours, made him appear to have been building a magnificent though fleeting monument to his own memory.[1]

Sainte Aldegonde, shut up in Antwerp, and hampered by dissension within and obstinate jealousy without the walls, did all in his power to frustrate the enemy's enterprise and animate the patriots. Through the whole of the autumn and early winter, he had urged the States of Holland and Zeeland to make use of the long winter nights, when moonless and stormy, to attempt the destruction of Parma's undertaking, but the fatal influences already indicated were more efficient against Antwerp than even the genius of Farnese; and nothing came of the burgomaster's entreaties save desultory skirmishing and unsuccessful enterprises. An especial misfortune happened in one of these midnight undertakings. Teligny ventured forth in a row-barge, with scarcely any companions, to notify the Zeelanders of a contemplated movement, in which their co-operation was desired. It was proposed that the Antwerp troops should make a fictitious demon-

[1] Bentivoglio, Strada, *ubi sup.*

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stration upon Fort Ordam, while at the same moment the States' troops from Fort Lillo should make an assault upon the forts on Kowenstyn Dyke; and in this important enterprise the Zeeland vessels were requested to assist. But the brave Teligny nearly forfeited his life by his rashness, and his services were, for a long time, lost to the cause of liberty. It had been better to send a less valuable officer upon such hazardous yet subordinate service. The drip of his oars was heard in the darkness. He was pursued by a number of armed barges, attacked, wounded severely in the shoulder, and captured. He threw his letters overboard, but they were fished out of the water, carried to Parma, and deciphered, so that the projected attack upon the Kowenstyn was discovered, and, of necessity, deferred. As for Teligny, he was taken, as a most valuable prize, into the enemy's camp, and was soon afterwards thrust into prison at Tournay, where he remained six years—one year longer than the period which his illustrious father had been obliged to consume in the infamous dungeon at Mons. Few disasters could have been more keenly felt by the States than the loss of this brilliant and devoted French chieftain, who, young as he was, had already become very dear to the republic; and Sainte Aldegonde was severely blamed for sending so eminent a personage on that dangerous expedition, and for sending him, too, with an insufficient convoy.[1]

Still Alexander felt uncertain as to the result. He was determined to secure Antwerp, but he yet thought it possible to secure it by negotiation. The enigmatical policy maintained by France perplexed him; for it did not seem possible that so much apparent solemnity and earnestness were destined to lead to an impotent and infamous conclusion. He was left, too, for a long time in ignorance of his own master's secret schemes, he was at liberty to guess, and to guess only, as to the projects of the league, he was without adequate means to carry out to a certain triumph his magnificent enterprise, and he was in constant alarm lest he should be suddenly assailed by an overwhelming French force. Had a man sat upon the

[1] Bor, II. 507, 508. Meteren, xii. 218. Strada, II. 319, 320.

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throne of Henry III. at that moment, Parma's bridge-making and dyke-fortifying—skilful as they were—would have been all in vain. Meantime, in uncertainty as to the great issue, but resolved to hold firmly to his purpose, he made repeated conciliatory offers to the States with one hand, while he steadily prosecuted his aggressive schemes with the other.

Parma had become really gentle, almost affectionate, towards the Netherlanders. He had not the disposition of an Alva to smite and to blast, to exterminate the rebels and heretics with fire and sword, with the axe, the rack, and the gallows. Provided they would renounce the great object of the contest, he seemed really desirous that they should escape further chastisement; but to admit the worship of God according to the reformed creed, was with him an inconceivable idea. To do so was both unrighteous and impolitic. He had been brought up to believe that mankind could be saved from eternal perdition only by believing in the infallibility of the Bishop of Rome; that the only keys to eternal paradise were in the hands of St. Peter's representative. Moreover, he instinctively felt that within this religious liberty which the Netherlanders claimed was hidden the germ of civil liberty; and though no bigger than a grain of mustard-seed, it was necessary to destroy it at once; for of course the idea of civil liberty could not enter the brain of the brilliant general of Philip II.

On the 13th of November he addressed a letter to the magistracy and broad-council of Antwerp. He asserted that the instigators of the rebellion were not seeking to 13th Nov., 1584. further the common weal, but their own private ends. Especially had this been the ruling motive with the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Anjou, both of whom God had removed from the world, in order to manifest to the States their own weakness, and the omnipotence of Philip, whose prosperity the Lord was constantly increasing. It was now more than time for the authorities of the country to have regard for themselves, and for the miseries of the poor people. The affection which he had always felt for the Provinces—

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from which he had himself sprung—and the favours which he had received from them in his youth, had often moved him to propose measures, which, before God and his conscience, he believed adequate to the restoration of peace. But his letters had been concealed or falsely interpreted by the late Prince of Orange, who had sought nothing but to spread desolation over the land, and to shed the blood of the innocent. He now wrote once more, and for the last time, in all fervour and earnestness, to implore them to take compassion on their own wives and children and forlorn fatherland, to turn their eyes backward on the peace and prosperity which they had formerly enjoyed when obedient to his Majesty, and to cast a glance around them upon the miseries which were so universal since the rebellion. He exhorted them to close their ears to the insidious tongues of those who were leading them into delusion as to the benevolence and paternal sweetness of their natural lord and master, which were even now so boundless that he did not hesitate once more to offer them his entire forgiveness. If they chose to negotiate, they would find everything granted that with right and reason could be proposed. The Prince concluded by declaring that he made these advances not from any doubt as to the successful issue of the military operations in which he was engaged, but simply out of paternal anxiety for the happiness of the Provinces. Did they remain obstinate, their ultimate conditions would be rendered still more severe, and themselves, not he, would be responsible for the misery and the bloodshed to ensue.[1]

Ten days afterwards, the magistrates, thus addressed—after communication with the broad-council—answered Parma's letter manfully, copiously, and with the customary but superfluous historical sketch. They begged leave to entertain a doubt as to the paternal sweetness of a king who had dealt so long in racks and gibbets. With Parma's own mother, as they told the Prince, the Netherlanders had once made a treaty, by which the right to wor-

23rd Nov., 1584.

[1] See the letters in Meteren, xii. 219, Bor, II. 502, 503. Hoofd Vervolgh, 60.

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ship God according to their consciences had been secured; yet for maintaining that treaty they had been devoted to indiscriminate destruction, and their land made desolate with fire and sword. Men had been massacred by thousands, who had never been heard in their own defence, and who had never been accused of any crime, "save that they had assembled together in the name of God, to pray to Him through their only mediator and advocate Jesus Christ, according to His command."[1]

The axis of the revolt was the religious question; and it was impossible to hope anything from a monarch who was himself a slave of the Inquisition, and who had less independence of action than that enjoyed by Jews and Turks, according to the express permission of the Pope. Therefore they informed Parma that they had done with Philip for ever, and that in consequence of the extraordinary wisdom, justice, and moderation, of the French King, they had offered him the sovereignty of their land, and had implored his protection.

They paid a tribute to the character of Farnese, who after gaining infinite glory in arms, had manifested so much gentleness and disposition to conciliate. They doubted not that he would, if he possessed the power, have guided the royal councils to better and more generous results, and protested that they would not have delayed to throw themselves into his arms, had they been assured that he was authorized to admit that which alone could form the basis of a successful negotiation—religious freedom. They would in such case have *been willing to close with him, without talking about other conditions* than such as his Highness in his discretion and sweetness might think reasonable.

Moreover, as they observed in conclusion, they were precluded, by their present relations with France, from entering into any other negotiation; nor could they listen to any such proposals without deserving to be stigmatized as the most lewd, blasphemous, and thankless mortals, that ever cumbered the earth.

[1] Letters in Bor, Meteren, Hooft, *ubi sup.*

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Being under equal obligations both to the Union and to France, they announced that Parma's overtures would be laid before the French government and the assembly of the States-General.[1]

A day was to come, perhaps, when it would hardly seem lewdness and blasphemy for the Netherlanders to doubt the extraordinary justice and wisdom of the French King. Meantime, it cannot be denied that they were at least loyal to their own engagements, and long-suffering where they had trusted and given their hearts.

Parma replied by another letter, dated December 3rd. He assured the citizens that Henry III. was far too discreet, and much too good a friend to Philip II., to countenance this rebellion. If he were to take up their quarrel, however, the King of Spain had a thousand means of foiling all his attempts. As to the religious question—which they affirmed to be the sole cause of the war—he was not inclined to waste words upon that subject; nevertheless, so far as he in his simplicity could understand the true nature of a Christian, he could not believe that it comported with the doctrines of Jesus, whom they called their only mediator, nor with the dictates of conscience, to take up arms against their lawful king, nor to burn, rob, plunder, pierce dykes, overwhelm their fatherland, and reduce all things to misery and chaos, in the name of religion.[2]

10th Dec., 1584.

Thus moralizing and dogmatizing, the Prince concluded his letter, and so the correspondence terminated. This last despatch was communicated at once both to the States-General and to the French government, and remained unanswered. Soon afterwards the Netherlands and England, France and Spain, were engaged in that vast game of delusion which has been described in the preceding chapters. Meantime both Antwerp and Parma remained among the deluded, and were left to fight out their battle on their own resources.

Having found it impossible to subdue Antwerp by his rhetoric, Alexander proceeded with his bridge. It is impossible

[1] Letters in Bor, Meteren, Hoofd, *ubi sup.* [2] Ibid.

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not to admire the steadiness and ingenuity with which the Prince persisted in his plans, the courage with which he bore up against the parsimony and neglect of his sovereign, the compassionate tenderness which he manifested for his patient little army. So much intellectual energy commands enthusiasm, while the supineness on the other side sometimes excites indignation. There is even a danger of being entrapped into sympathy with tyranny, when the cause of tyranny is maintained by genius; and of being surprised into indifference for human liberty, when the sacred interests of liberty are endangered by self-interest, perverseness, and folly.

Even Sainte Aldegonde did not believe that the bridge could be completed. His fears were that the city would be ruined rather by the cessation of its commerce than by want of daily food. Already, after the capture of Liefkenshoek and the death of Orange, the panic among commercial people had been so intense that seventy or eighty merchants, representing the most wealthy mercantile firms in Antwerp, made their escape from the place, as if it had been smitten with pestilence, or were already in the hands of Parma.[1] All such refugees were ordered to return on peril of forfeiting their property. Few came back, however, for they had found means of converting and transferring their funds to other more secure places, despite the threatened confiscation. It was insinuated that Holland and Zeeland were indifferent to the fate of Antwerp, because in the sequel the commercial cities of those Provinces succeeded to the vast traffic and the boundless wealth which had been forfeited by the Brabantine capital. The charge was an unjust one. At the very commencement of the siege the States of Holland voted two hundred thousand florins for its relief; and, moreover, these wealthy refugees were positively denied admittance into the territory of the United States, and were thus forced to settle in Germany or England.[2] This cessation of traffic was that which principally excited the anxiety of Aldegonde. He could not bring himself to believe in the possibility of a blockade, by an army of

[1] Baudartii 'Polemographia,' II. 24. [2] Ibid.

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eight or ten thousand men, of a great and wealthy city, where at least twenty thousand citizens were capable of bearing arms. Had he thoroughly understood the deprivations under which Alexander was labouring, perhaps he would have been even more confident as to the result.

"With regard to the affair of the river Scheldt," wrote Parma to Philip, "I should like to send your Majesty a drawing of the whole scheme; for the work is too vast to be explained by letters. The more I examine it, the more astonished I am that it should have been conducted to this point; so many forts, dykes, canals, new inventions, machinery, and engines, have been necessarily required."[1]

15 Jan. 1585.

He then proceeded to enlighten the King—as he never failed to do in all his letters—as to his own impoverished, almost helpless condition. Money, money, men! This was his constant cry. All would be in vain, he said, if he were thus neglected. "Tis necessary," said he, "for your Majesty fully to comprehend, that henceforth the enterprise is your own. I have done my work faithfully thus far; it is now for your Majesty to take it thoroughly to heart; and embrace it with the warmth with which an affair involving so much of your own interests deserves to be embraced."[2]

He avowed that without full confidence in his sovereign's sympathy he would never have conceived the project. "I confess that the enterprise is great," he said, "and that by many it will be considered rash. Certainly I should not have undertaken it, had I not felt certain of your Majesty's full support."[3]

But he was already in danger of being forced to abandon the whole scheme—although so nearly carried into effect—for want of funds. "The million promised," he wrote, "has arrived in bits and morsels, and with so many ceremonies, that I haven't ten crowns at my disposal. How I am to maintain even this handful of soldiers—for the army is

[1] Prince of Parma to Philip II., 15 Jan. 1585. Archivo de Simancas MS.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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diminished to such a mere handful that it would astonish your Majesty—I am unable to imagine. It would move you to witness their condition. They have suffered as much as is humanly possible."[1]

Many of the troops, indeed, were deserting, and making their escape, beggared and desperate, into France, where, with natural injustice, they denounced their General, whose whole heart was occupied with their miseries, for the delinquency of his master, whose mind was full of other schemes.

"There past this way many Spanish soldiers," wrote Stafford from Paris, "so poor and naked as I ever saw any. There have been within this fortnight two hundred at a time in this town, who report the extremity of want of victuals in their camp, and that they have been twenty-four months without pay. They exclaim greatly upon the Prince of Parma. Mendoza seeks to convey them away, and to get money for them by all means he can."[2] 29 Dec. 9 Jan. 1585.

Stafford urged upon his government the propriety of being at least as negligent as Philip had showed himself to be of the Spaniards. By prohibiting supplies to the besieging army, England might contribute, negatively, if not otherwise, to the relief of Antwerp. "There is no place," he wrote to Walsingham, "whence the Spaniards are so thoroughly victualled as from us. English boats go by sixteen and seventeen into Dunkirk, well laden with provisions."

This was certainly not in accordance with the interests nor the benevolent professions of the English ministers.

These supplies were not to be regularly depended upon however. They were likewise not to be had without paying a heavy price for them, and the Prince had no money in his coffer. He lived from hand to mouth, and was obliged to borrow from every private individual who had anything to lend. Merchants, nobles, official personages, were all obliged to assist in eking out the scanty pittance allowed by the sovereign.

[1] Prince of Parma to Philip II., &c. MS. just cited.
[2] Stafford to Walsingham, $\frac{29\text{ Dec. }1584.}{8\text{ Jan. }1585.}$ in Murdin, II. 434.

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"The million is all gone," wrote Parma to his master; "some to Verdugo in Friesland; some to repay the advances of Marquis Richebourg and other gentlemen. There is not a farthing for the garrisons. I can't go on a month longer, and, if not supplied, I shall be obliged to abandon the work. I have not money enough to pay my sailors, joiners, carpenters, and other mechanics, from week to week, and they will all leave me in the lurch, if I leave them unpaid. I have no resource but to rely on your Majesty. Otherwise the enterprise must wholly fail."[1]

In case it did fail, the Prince wiped his hands of the reponsibility. He certainly had the right to do so.

One of the main sources of supply was the city of Hertogenbosch, or Bois-le-Duc. It was one of the four chief cities of Brabant, and still held for the King, although many towns in its immediate neighbourhood had espoused the cause of the republic. The States had long been anxious to effect a diversion for the relief of Antwerp, by making an attack on Bois-le-Duc. Could they carry the place, Parma would be almost inevitably compelled to abandon the siege in which he was at present engaged, and he could moreover spare no troops for its defence. Bois-le-Duc was a populous, wealthy, thriving town, situate on the Deeze, two leagues above its confluence with the Meuse, and about twelve leagues from Antwerp. It derived its name of 'Duke's Wood' from a magnificent park and forest, once the favourite resort and residence of the old Dukes of Brabant, of which some beautiful vestiges still remained. It was a handsome well-built city, with two thousand houses of the better class, besides more humble tenements. Its citizens were celebrated for their courage and belligerent skill, both on foot and on horseback. They were said to retain more of the antique Belgic ferocity which Cæsar had celebrated than that which had descended to most of their kinsmen. The place was, moreover, the seat of many prosperous manufactures. Its clothiers sent the products of their looms over

[1] MS. Letter of Parma, before cited.

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all Christendom, and its linen and cutlery were equally renowned.[1]

It would be a most fortunate blow in the cause of freedom to secure so thriving and conspicuous a town, situated thus in the heart of what seemed the natural territory of the United States; and, by so doing, to render nugatory the mighty preparations of Parma against Antwerp. Moreover, it was known that there was no Spanish or other garrison within its walls, so that there was no opposition to be feared, except from the warlike nature of the citizens.

Count Hohenlo was entrusted, early in January, with this important enterprise. He accordingly collected a force of four thousand infantry, together with two hundred mounted lancers; having previously reconnoitered the ground. He relied very much, for the success of the undertaking, on Captain Kleerhagen, a Brussels nobleman, whose wife was a native of Bois-le-Duc, and who was thoroughly familiar with the locality. One dark winter's night, Kleerhagen, with fifty picked soldiers, advanced to the Antwerp gate of Bois-le-Duc, while Hohenlo, with his whole force, lay in ambuscade as near as possible to the city. January, 1585.

Between the drawbridge and the portcullis were two small guard-houses, which, very carelessly, had been left empty. Kleerhagen, with his fifty followers, successfully climbed into these lurking-places, where they quietly ensconced themselves for the night. At eight o'clock of the following morning (20th January) the guards of the gate drew up the portcullis, and reconnoitered. At the same instant, the ambushed fifty sprang from their concealment, put them to the sword, and made themselves masters of the gate. None of the night-watch escaped with life, save one poor old invalided citizen, whose business had been to draw up the portcullis, and who was severely wounded, and left for dead. The fifty immediately summoned all of Hohenlo's ambuscade that were within hearing, and then, without waiting for them, entered the town pell-mell in the 20th Jan., 1585.

[1] Guicciardini, *in voce.*

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best of spirits, and shouting victory! victory! till they were hoarse. A single corporal, with two men, was left to guard the entrance. Meantime, the old wounded gate-opener, bleeding and crippled, crept into a dark corner, and laid himself down, unnoticed, to die.

Soon afterwards Hohenlo galloped into the town, clad in complete armour, his long curls floating in the wind, with about two hundred troopers clattering behind him, closely followed by five hundred pike-men on foot.

Very brutally, foolishly, and characteristically, he had promised his followers the sacking of the city so soon as it should be taken. They accordingly set about the sacking, before it was taken. Hardly had the five or six hundred effected their entrance, than throwing off all control, they dispersed through the principal streets, and began bursting open the doors of the most opulent households. The cries of "victory!" "gained city!" "down with the Spaniards!" resounded on all sides. Many of the citizens, panic-struck, fled from their homes, which they thus abandoned to pillage, while, meantime, the loud shouts of the assailants reached the ears of the sergeant and his two companies who had been left in charge of the gate. Fearing that they should be cheated of their rightful share in the plunder, they at once abandoned their post, and set forth after their comrades, as fast as their legs could carry them.

Now it so chanced—although there was no garrison in the town—that forty Burgundian and Italian lancers, with about thirty foot-soldiers, had come in the day before to escort a train of merchandise. The Seigneur de Haultepenne, governor of Breda, a famous royalist commander—son of old Count Berlaymont, who first gave the name of "beggars" to the patriots—had accompanied them in the expedition. The little troop were already about to mount their horses to depart, when they became aware of the sudden tumult. Elmont, governor of the city, had also flown to the rescue, and had endeavoured to rally the burghers. Not unmindful of their ancient warlike fame, they had obeyed his entreaties.

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Elmont, with a strong party of armed citizens, joined himself to Haultepenne's little band of lancers. They fired a few shots at straggling parties of plunderers, and pursued others up some narrow streets. They were but an handful in comparison with the number of the patriots, who had gained entrance to the city. They were, however, compact, united, and resolute. The assailants were scattered, disorderly, and bent only upon plunder. When attacked by an armed and regular band, they were amazed. They had been told that there was no garrison; and behold a choice phalanx of Spanish lancers, led on by one of the most famous of Philip's Netherland chieftains. They thought themselves betrayed by Kleerhagen, entrapped into a deliberately arranged ambush. There was a panic. The soldiers, dispersed and doubtful, could not be rallied. Hohenlo, seeing that nothing was to be done with his five hundred, galloped furiously out of the gate, to bring in the rest of his troops who had remained outside the walls. The prize of the wealthy city of Bois-le-Duc was too tempting to be lightly abandoned; but he had much better have thought of making himself master of it himself before he should present it as a prey to his followers.

During his absence the panic spread. The States' troops, bewildered, astonished, vigorously assaulted, turned their backs upon their enemies, and fled helter-skelter towards the gates, through which they had first gained admittance. But unfortunately for them, so soon as the corporal had left his position, the wounded old gate-opener, in a dying condition, had crawled forth on his hands and knees from a dark hole in the tower, cut, with a pocket-knife, the ropes of the portcullis, and then given up the ghost. Most effective was that blow struck by a dead man's hand. Down came the portcullis. The flying plunderers were entrapped. Close behind them came the excited burghers—their antique Belgic ferocity now fully aroused—firing away with carbine and matchlock, dealing about them with bludgeon and cutlass, and led merrily on by Haultepenne and Elmont armed in

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proof, at the head of their squadron of lancers. The unfortunate patriots had risen very early in the morning only to shear the wolf. Some were cut to pieces in the streets; others climbed the walls, and threw themselves head foremost into the moat. Many were drowned, and but a very few effected their escape. Justinus de Nassau sprang over the parapet, and succeeded in swimming the ditch. Kleerhagen, driven into the Holy Cross tower, ascended to its roof, leaped, all accoutred as he was, into the river, and, with the assistance of a Scotch soldier, came safe to land. Ferdinand Truchsess, brother of the ex-elector of Cologne, was killed. Four or five hundred of the assailants—nearly all who had entered the city—were slain, and about fifty of the burghers.

Hohenlo soon came back, with Colonel Ysselstein, and two thousand fresh troops. But their noses, says a contemporary, grew a hundred feet long with surprise when they saw the gate shut in their faces.[1] It might have occurred to the Count, when he rushed out of the town for reinforcements, that it would be as well to replace the guard, which—as he must have seen—had abandoned their post.

Cursing his folly, he returned, mavellously discomfited, and deservedly censured, to Gertruydenberg. And thus had a most important enterprise, which had nearly been splendidly successful, ended in disaster and disgrace. To the recklessness of the general, to the cupidity which he had himself awakened in his followers, was the failure alone to be attributed. Had he taken possession of the city with a firm grasp at the head of his four thousand men, nothing could have resisted him; Haultepenne, and his insignificant force, would have been dead, or his prisoners; the basis of Parma's magnificent operations would have been withdrawn; Antwerp would have been saved.[2]

[1] Le Petit II. 506.

[2] For the enterprise against Bois-le-Duc, see Le Petit, ii. 505-506; Baudartii Polemog. ii. 39; Meteren, xii. 222; Strada, ii. 326, 327 (who by a singular lapse of the pen represents Justinus de Nassau as having been killed, "Reperti inter eos, qui desiderati sunt, Ferd. Truchsesius, *et nothus Orangii filius*," &c. 327;) Bor. ii. 558; Van Wyn op Wagenaar, viii. 34, *seq.*; Letter of Parma to the King, 12 Feb. 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.)

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"Infinite gratitude," wrote Parma to Philip, "should be rendered to the Lord. Great thanks are also due to Haultepenne. *Had the rebels succeeded in their enterprise against Bolduc, I should have been compelled to abandon the siege of Antwerp.* The town, by its strength and situation, is of infinite importance for the reduction both of that place and of Brussels, and the rebels in possession of Bolduc would have cut off my supplies."[1]

The Prince recommended Haultepenne most warmly to the King as deserving of a rich "merced." The true hero of the day, however—at least the chief agent in the victory—was the poor, crushed, nameless victim who had cut the ropes of the portcullis at the Antwerp gate.

Hohenlo was deeply stung by the disgrace which he had incurred. For a time he sought oblivion in hard drinking; but—brave and energetic, though reckless—he soon became desirous of retrieving his reputation by more successful enterprises. There was no lack of work, and assuredly his hands were rarely idle.

"Hollach (Hohenlo) is gone from hence on Friday last," wrote Davison to Walsingham, "he will do what he may to recover his reputation lost in the attempt of Bois-le-Duc; which, for the grief and trouble he hath conceived thereof, hath for the time greatly altered him."[2]

Meantime the turbulent Scheldt, lashed by the storms of winter, was becoming a more formidable enemy to Parma's great enterprise than the military demonstrations of his enemies, or the famine which was making such havoc with his little army. The ocean-tides were rolling huge ice-blocks up and down, which beat against his palisade with the noise of thunder, and seemed to threaten its immediate destruction. But the work stood firm. The piles supporting the piers, which had been thrust out from each bank into the stream, had been driven fifty feet into the river's bed, and did their duty well. But in the space between, twelve hundred and

[1] MS. Letter of Parma just cited.
[2] Davison to Walsingham, Feb. 12, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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forty feet in width, the current was too deep for pile-driving, and a permanent bridge was to be established upon boats. And that bridge was to be laid across the icy and tempestuous flood, in the depth of winter, in the teeth of a watchful enemy, with the probability of an immediate invasion from France, —where the rebel envoys were known to be negotiating on express invitation of the King—by half-naked, half-starving soldiers and sailors, unpaid for years, and for the sake of a master who seemed to have forgotten their existence.

"Thank God," wrote Alexander, "the palisade stands firm in spite of the ice. Now with the favour of the Lord, we shall soon get the fruit we have been hoping, if your Majesty is not wanting in that to which your grandeur, your great Christianity, your own interests, oblige you. In truth 'tis a great and heroic work, worthy the great power of your Majesty." "For my own part," he continued, "I have done what depended upon me. From your own royal hand must emanate the rest;—men, namely, sufficient to maintain the posts, and money enough to support them there."[1]

He expressed himself in the strongest language concerning the danger to the royal cause from the weak and gradually sinking condition of the army. Even without the French intrigues with the rebels, concerning which, in his ignorance of the exact state of affairs, he expressed much anxiety, it would be impossible, he said, to save the royal cause without men and money.

"I have spared myself," said the Prince, "neither day nor night. Let not your Majesty impute the blame to me if we fail. Verdugo also is uttering a perpetual cry out of Friesland for men—men and money."

Yet, notwithstanding all these obstacles, the bridge was finished at last. On the 25th February, the day sacred to Saint Matthew, and of fortunate augury to the Emperor Charles, father of Philip and grandfather of Alexander, the Scheldt was closed.[2]

25 Feb. 1585.

[1] MS. Letter of Parma before cited. [2] Ibid.
[3] Parma to Philip, 27 Feb. 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.)

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As already stated, from Fort Saint Mary on the Kalloo side, and from Fort Philip, not far from Ordam on the Brabant shore of the Scheldt, strong structures, supported upon piers, had been projected, reaching, respectively, five hundred feet into the stream. These two opposite ends were now connected by a permanent bridge of boats. There were thirty-two of these barges, each of them sixty-two feet in length and twelve in breadth, the spaces between each couple being twenty-two feet wide, and all being bound together, stem, stern, and midships, by quadruple hawsers and chains. Each boat was anchored at stem and stern with loose cables. Strong timbers, with cross rafters, were placed upon the boats, upon which heavy frame-work the planked pathway was laid down. A thick parapet of closely-fitting beams was erected along both the outer edges of the whole fabric. Thus a continuous and well-fortified bridge, two thousand four hundred feet in length, was stretched at last from shore to shore. Each of the thirty-two boats on which the central portion of the structure reposed, was a small fortress provided with two heavy pieces of artillery, pointing, the one up, the other down the stream, and manned by thirty-two soldiers and four sailors, defended by a breastwork formed of gabions of great thickness.

The forts of Saint Philip and St. Mary, at either end of the bridge, had each ten great guns, and both were filled with soldiers. In front of each fort, moreover, was stationed a fleet of twenty armed vessels, carrying heavy pieces of artillery; ten anchored at the angle towards Antwerp, and as many looking down the river. One hundred and seventy great guns, including the armaments of the boats under the bridge of the armada and the forts, protected the whole structure, pointing up and down the stream.

But, besides these batteries, an additional precaution had been taken. On each side, above and below the bridge, at a moderate distance—a bow shot—was anchored a heavy raft floating upon empty barrels. Each raft was composed of heavy timbers, bound together in bunches of three, the

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spaces between being connected by ships' masts and lighter spar-work, and with a tooth-like projection along the whole outer edge, formed of strong rafters, pointed and armed with sharp prongs and hooks of iron. Thus a serried phalanx, as it were, of spears stood ever on guard to protect the precious inner structure. Vessels coming from Zeeland or Antwerp, and the floating ice-masses, which were almost as formidable, were obliged to make their first attack upon these dangerous outer defences. Each raft, floating in the middle of the stream, extended twelve hundred and fifty-two feet across, thus protecting the whole of the bridge of boats and a portion of that resting upon piles.[1]

Such was the famous bridge of Parma. The magnificent undertaking has been advantageously compared with the celebrated Rhine-bridge of Julius Cæsar. When it is remembered, however, that the Roman work was performed in summer, across a river only half as broad as the Scheldt, free from the disturbing action of the tides, and flowing through an unresisting country; while the whole character of the structure, intended only to serve for the single passage of an army, was far inferior to the massive solidity of Parma's bridge; it seems not unreasonable to assign the superiority to the general who had surmounted all the obstacles of a northern winter, vehement ebb and flow from the sea, and enterprising and desperate enemies at every point.

When the citizens, at last, looked upon the completed fabric, converted from the "dream," which they had pronounced it to be, into a terrible reality; when they saw the shining array of Spanish and Italian legions marching and counter-marching upon their new road, and trampling, as it were, the turbulent river beneath their feet; when they witnessed the solemn military spectacle with which the Governor-General celebrated his success, amid peals of cannon and shouts of triumph from his army, they bitterly

[1] MS. Letter of Parma before cited. Compare Strada, ii. 312 *seq.*; Bentivoglio, P. ii. and L. iii. 988-990; Meteren, xii. 218 *seq.*; Bor. ii. L. xx. 590 *seq.* (with admirable plans, etchings and maps); Baudartii Polemog. ii. 22, *seq.* (with very good engravings.)

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bewailed their own folly. Yet even then they could hardly believe that the work had been accomplished by human agency, but they loudly protested that invisible demons had been summoned to plan and perfect this fatal and preter-human work. They were wrong. There had been but one demon—one clear, lofty intelligence, inspiring a steady and untiring hand. The demon was the intellect of Alexander Farnese; but it had been assisted in its labour by the hundred devils of envy, covetousness, jealousy, selfishness, distrust, and discord, that had housed, not in his camp, but in the ranks of those who were contending for their hearths and altars.

And thus had the Prince arrived at success in spite of every obstacle. He took a just pride in the achievement, yet he knew by how many dangers he was still surrounded, and he felt hurt at his sovereign's neglect. "The enterprise at Antwerp," he wrote to Philip on the day the bridge was completed," "is so great and heroic that to celebrate it would require me to speak more at large than I like to do, for fear of being tedious to your Majesty. What I will say, is that the labours and difficulties have been every day so great, that if your Majesty knew them, you would estimate what we have done more highly than you do; *and not forget us so utterly, leaving us to die of hunger.*"[1]

He considered the fabric in itself almost impregnable, provided he were furnished with the means to maintain what he had so painfully constructed.

"The whole is in such condition," said he, "that in opinion of all competent military judges it would stand though all Holland and Zeeland should come to destroy our palisades. Their attacks must be made at immense danger and disadvantage, so severely can we play upon them with our artillery and musketry. Every boat is garnished with the most dainty captains and soldiers, so that if the enemy should attempt to assail us now, they would come back with broken heads."[2]

[1] "Y no nos tenia tan olvidados, ni permitiria dexarnos en tanta necessidad que no habemos de morir de hambre," &c. (MS. Letter of Parma to Philip, 27 Feb. 1585.)

[2] Parma to Philip II., 28 Feb. 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.)

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Yet in the midst of his apparent triumph he had, at times, almost despair in his heart. He felt really at the last gasp. His troops had dwindled to the mere shadow of an army, and they were forced to live almost upon air. The cavalry had nearly vanished. The garrisons in the different cities were starving. The burghers had no food for the soldiers nor for themselves. "As for the rest of the troops," said Alexander, "they are stationed where they have nothing to subsist upon, save salt water and the dykes, and if the Lord does not grant a miracle, succour, even if sent by your Majesty, will arrive too late."[1] He assured his master, that he could not go on more than five or six days longer, that he had been feeding his soldiers for a long time from hand to mouth, and that it would soon be impossible for him to keep his troops together. If he did not disband them they would run away.[2]

His pictures were most dismal, his supplications for money very moving, but he never alluded to himself. All his anxiety, all his tenderness, were for his soldiers. "They must have food," he said. "'Tis impossible to sustain them any longer by driblets, as I have done for a long time. Yet how can I do it without money? And I have none at all, nor do I see where to get a single florin."

But these revelations were made only to his master's most secret ear. His letters, deciphered after three centuries, alone make manifest the almost desperate condition in which the apparently triumphant general was placed, and the facility with which his antagonists, had they been well guided and faithful to themselves, might have driven him into the sea.

But to those adversaries he maintained an attitude of serene and smiling triumph. A spy, sent from the city to obtain intelligence for the anxious burghers, had gained admission into his lines, was captured and brought before the Prince. He expected, of course, to be immediately hanged. On the contrary, Alexander gave orders that he should be conducted over every part of the encampment. The forts, the palisades,

[1] Same to same, 27 Feb. 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.) [2] Ibid.

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the bridge, were all to be carefully exhibited and explained to him as if he had been a friendly visitor entitled to every information. He was requested to count the pieces of artillery in the forts, on the bridge, in the armada. After thoroughly studying the scene he was then dismissed with a safe-conduct to the city.

"Go back to those who sent you," said the Prince. "Convey to them the information in quest of which you came. Apprize them of every thing which you have inspected, counted, heard explained. Tell them further, that the siege will never be abandoned, and that this bridge will be my sepulchre or my pathway into Antwerp."[1]

And now the aspect of the scene was indeed portentous. The chimera had become a very visible bristling reality. There stood the bridge which the citizens had ridiculed while it was growing before their faces. There scowled the Kowenstyn—black with cannon, covered all over with fortresses —which the butchers had so sedulously preserved. From Parma's camp at Beveren and Kalloo a great fortified road led across the river and along the fatal dyke all the way to the entrenchments at Stabroek, where Mansfeld's army lay. Grim Mondragon held the "holy cross" and the whole Kowenstyn in his own iron grasp. A chain of forts, built and occupied by the contending hosts of the patriots and the Spaniards, were closely packed together along both banks of the Scheldt, nine miles long from Antwerp to Lillo, and interchanged perpetual cannonades. The country all around, once fertile as a garden, had been changed into a wild and wintry sea, where swarms of gun-boats and other armed vessels manœuvred and contended with each other over submerged villages and orchards, and among half-drowned turrets and steeples. Yet there rose the great bulwark—whose early destruction would have made all this desolation a blessing—unbroken and obstinate; a perpetual obstacle to communication between Antwerp and Zeeland. The very spirit of the murdered Prince of Orange seemed to rise sadly and reproach-

[1] Strada, ii. 325. 326.

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fully out of the waste of waters, as if to rebuke the men who had been so deaf to his solemn warnings.

Brussels, too, wearied and worn, its heart sick with hope deferred, now fell into despair as the futile result of the French negotiation became apparent. The stately and opulent city had long been in a most abject condition. Many of its inhabitants attempted to escape from the horrors of starving by flying from its walls. Of the fugitives, the men were either scourged back by the Spaniards into the city, or hanged up along the road-side. The women were treated leniently, even playfully, for it was thought an excellent jest to cut off the petticoats of the unfortunate starving creatures up to their knees, and then command them to go back and starve at home with their friends and fellow-citizens. A great many persons literally died of hunger. Matrons with large families poisoned their children and themselves to avoid the more terrible death by starving.[1] At last, when Vilvoorde was taken, when the baseness of the French King was thoroughly understood, when Parma's bridge was completed and the Scheldt bridled, Brussels capitulated on as favourable terms as could well have been expected.[2]

13 March, 1585.

Notwithstanding these triumphs, Parma was much inconvenienced by not possessing the sea-coast of Flanders. Ostend was a perpetual stumbling-block to him. He therefore assented, with pleasure to a proposition made by La Motte, one of the most experienced and courageous of the Walloon royalist commanders, to attempt the place by surprise. And La Motte, at the first blow, was more than half successful. On the night of the 29th March, with two thousand foot and twelve hundred cavalry, he carried the whole of the old port of Ostend. Leaving a Walloon officer, in whom he had confidence, to guard the position already

29 March 1585.

[1] Strada, ii. 329, 330.

[2] Ibid.; Meteren, xii. 22ᵛᵒ; Le Petit, ii. 511. The burghers were allowed two years, during which they were to decide between the Papacy and perpetual exile. The municipal liberties were to depend upon the pleasure of the King. The houses of Cardinal Granville and of Count Mansfeld were to be rebuilt and refurnished.

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gained, he went back in person for reinforcements. During his advance, the same ill luck attended his enterprise which had blasted Hohenlo's achievement at Bois-le-Duc. The soldiers he left behind him deserted their posts for the sake of rifling the town. The officer in command, instead of keeping them to their duty, joined in the chase. The citizens roused themselves, attacked their invaders, killed many of them, and put the rest to flight. When La Motte returned, he found the panic general. His whole force, including the fresh soldiers just brought to the rescue, were beside themselves with fear. He killed several with his own hand, but the troops were not to be rallied. His quick triumph was changed into an absolute defeat.

Parma, furious at the ignominious result of a plan from which so much had been expected, ordered the Walloon captain, from whose delinquency so much disaster had resulted, to be forthwith hanged. "Such villainy," said he, "must never go unpunished."[1]

It was impossible for the Prince to send a second expedition to attempt the reduction of Ostend, for the patriots were at last arousing themselves to the necessity of exertion. It was very obvious—now that the bridge had been built, and the Kowenstyn fortified—that one or the other was to be destroyed, or Antwerp abandoned to its fate.

The patriots had been sleeping, as it were, all the winter, hugging the delusive dream of French sovereignty and French assistance. No language can exaggerate the deadly effects from the slow poison of that negotiation. At any rate, the negotiation was now concluded. The dream was dispelled. Antwerp must now fall, or a decisive blow must be struck by the patriots themselves, and a telling blow had been secretly and maturely meditated. Certain preparatory steps were however necessary.

[1] Parma to Philip II., 10 Apr., 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.) Compare Strada, ii. 332, who says that three of the officers were condemned to be executed, but that all were subsequently pardoned on account of the previous good conduct of one of them. Alexander in his letter informs the King that he had ordered one to be executed forthwith, as an example to the others.

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The fort of Liefkenshoek, "darling's corner," was a most important post. The patriots had never ceased to regret that precious possession, lost, as we have seen, in so tragical a manner on the very day of Orange's death. Fort Lillo, exactly opposite, on the Brabant shore of the Scheldt, had always been securely held by them, and was their strongest position. Were both places in their power, the navigation of the river, at least as far as the bridge, would be comparatively secure.

A sudden dash was made upon Liefkenshoek. A number of armed vessels sailed up from Zeeland, under command of Justinus de Nassau. They were assisted from Fort Lillo by a detachment headed by Count Hohenlo. These two officers were desirous of retrieving the reputation which they had lost at Bois-le-Duc. They were successful, and the "darling" fort was carried at a blow. After a brief cannonade, the patriots made a breach, effected a landing, and sprang over the ramparts. The Walloons and Spaniards fled in dismay; many of them were killed in the fort, and along the dykes; others were hurled into the Scheldt. The victors followed up their success by reducing, with equal impetuosity, the fort of Saint Anthony, situate in the neighbourhood farther down the river. They thus gained entire command of all the high ground, which remained in that quarter above the inundation, and was called the Doel.[1]

4 April, 1585.

The dyke, on which Liefkenshoek stood, led up the river towards Kalloo, distant less than a league. There were Parma's head-quarters and the famous bridge. But at Fort Saint Mary, where the Flemish head of that bridge rested, the dyke was broken. Upon that broken end the commanders of the expedition against Liefkenshoek were ordered to throw up an entrenchment, without loss of a moment, so soon as they should have gained the fortresses which they were ordered first to assault. Sainte Aldegonde had given urgent written directions to this effect. From a redoubt situated thus, in the very face of Saint Mary's, that position, the

[1] Le Petit, ii. 511; Strada, ii. 383.

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palisade-work, the whole bridge, might be battered with all the artillery that could be brought from Zeeland.

But Parma was beforehand with them. Notwithstanding his rage and mortification that Spanish soldiers should have ignominiously lost the important fortress which Richebourg had conquered so brilliantly nine months before, he was not the man to spend time in unavailing regrets. His quick eye instantly detected the flaw which might soon be fatal. In the very same night of the loss of Liefkenshoek, he sent as strong a party as could be spared, with plenty of sappers and miners, in flat-bottomed boats across from Kalloo. As the morning dawned, an improvised fortress, with the Spanish flag waving above its bulwarks, stood on the broken end of the dyke. That done, he ordered one of the two captains who had commanded in Liefkenshoek and Saint Anthony to be beheaded on the same dyke. The other was dismissed with ignominy.[1] Ostend was, of course, given up; "but it was not a small matter," said Parma, "to fortify ourselves that very night upon the ruptured place, and so prevent the rebels from doing it, which would have been very mal-à-propos."[2]

Nevertheless, the rebels had achieved a considerable success; and now or never the telling blow, long meditated, was to be struck.

There lived in Antwerp a subtle Mantuan, Gianibelli by name, who had married and been long settled in the city. He had made himself busy with various schemes for victualling the place. He had especially urged upon the authorities, at an early period of the siege, the propriety of making large purchases of corn and storing it in magazines at a time when the famine-price had by no means been reached.[3] But the leading men had then their heads full of a great ship, or floating castle, which they were building, and which they

[1] Strada, ii. 333. Bor, ii. 596, and Bentivoglio, P. ii. L. iii. p. 291, say that both the commandants were beheaded. The Prince himself (MS. Letter to Philip, 10 April, 1585) relates the loss of the forts, but says nothing of the punishment inflicted upon the culprits.

[2] MS. Letter of Parma, just cited.

[3] Bor, ii. 500.

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had pompously named the 'War's End,' 'Fin de la Guerre.' We shall hear something of this phenomenon at a later period. Meanwhile, Gianibelli, who knew something of shipbuilding, as he did of most other useful matters, ridiculed the design, which was likely to cost, in itself before completion, as much money as would keep the city in bread for a third of a year.

Gianibelli was no patriot. He was purely a man of science and of great acquirements, who was looked upon by the ignorant populace alternately as a dreamer and a wizard. He was as indifferent to the cause of freedom as of despotism, but he had a great love for chemistry. He was also a profound mechanician, second to no man of his age in theoretic and practical engineering.

He had gone from Italy to Spain that he might offer his services to Philip, and give him the benefit of many original and ingenious inventions. Forced to dance attendance, day after day, among sneering courtiers and insolent placemen, and to submit to the criticism of practical sages and philosophers of routine, while he was constantly denied an opportunity of explaining his projects, the quick-tempered Italian had gone away at last, indignant. He had then vowed revenge upon the dulness by which his genius had been slighted, and had sworn that the next time the Spaniards heard the name of the man whom they had dared to deride, they should hear it with tears.[1]

He now laid before the senate of Antwerp a plan for some vessels likely to prove more effective than the gigantic 'War's End,' which he had prophesied would prove a failure. With these he pledged himself to destroy the bridge. He demanded three ships which he had selected from the city fleet—the 'Orange,' the 'Post,' and the 'Golden Lion,'—measuring, respectively, one hundred and fifty, three hundred and fifty, and five hundred tons. Besides these, he wished sixty flat-bottomed scows, which he proposed to send down the river, partially submerged, disposed in the shape of a half moon, with innumerable anchors and grapnells thrusting

[1] Strada, ii. 334, 335.

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themselves out of the water at every point. This machine was intended to operate against the raft.

Ignorance and incredulity did their work, as usual, and Gianbelli's request was refused. As a quarter-measure, nevertheless, he was allowed to take two smaller vessels of seventy and eighty tons. The Italian was disgusted with this parsimony upon so momentous an occasion, but he at the same time determined, even with these slender materials, to give an exhibition of his power.[1]

Not all his the glory, however, of the ingenious project. Associated with him were two skilful artizans of Antwerp; a clockmaker named Bory, and a mechanician named Timmerman;[2] but Gianibelli was the chief and superintendent of the whole daring enterprise.

He gave to his two ships the cheerful names of the 'Fortune' and the 'Hope,' and set himself energetically to justify their titles by their efficiency. They were to be floating marine volcanos, which, drifting down the river with the ebb tide, were to deal destruction where the Spaniards deemed themselves most secure.

In the hold of each vessel, along the whole length, was laid down a solid flooring of brick and mortar, one foot thick, and five feet wide. Upon this was built a chamber of marble mason-work, forty feet long, three and a half feet broad, as many high, and with side-walks five feet in thickness. This was the crater. It was filled with seven thousand pounds of gunpowder, of a kind superior to anything known, and prepared by Gianibelli himself. It was covered with a roof, six feet in thickness, formed of blue tombstones, placed edgewise. Over this crater, rose a hollow cone, or pyramid, made of heavy marble slabs, and filled with mill-stones,

[1] Bor, ii. 596, 597; Hoofd Vervolgh, 91.

[2] Bor, ii. 596, 597; Hoofd Vervolgh, 91; Strada, ii. 344 *seq.*; Meteren, xii. 223vo; Baudartii Polemog. ii. 24-27, with very curious illustrative plates; Bentivoglio, P. ii. L. iii. 291, 292; Reyd, iv. 60. (Letter of Parma to Philip, 10 April, 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

[3] Hondius, 'Korte Beschryving ende 'Afbeelding van de generale Regelen der Fortificatie.' 'SGravenhage, 1624, fol, cited in Mertens and Torfs' Gesch. v. Antwerpen, v. 223 *seq.*

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cannon balls, blocks of marble, chain-shot, iron hooks, plough-coulters, and every dangerous missile that could be imagined. The spaces between the mine and the sides of each ship were likewise filled with paving stones, iron-bound stakes, harpoons, and other projectiles. The whole fabric was then covered by a smooth light flooring of planks and brick-work, upon which was a pile of wood. This was to be lighted at the proper time, in order that the two vessels might present the appearance of simple fire-ships, intended only to excite a conflagration of the bridge. On the 'Fortune' a slow match, very carefully prepared, communicated with the submerged mine, which was to explode at a nicely-calculated moment. The eruption of the other floating volcano was to be regulated by an ingenious piece of clock-work, by which, at the appointed time, fire, struck from a flint, was to inflame the hidden mass of gunpowder below.

In addition to these two infernal machines, or "hell-burners," as they were called, a fleet of thirty-two smaller vessels was prepared. Covered with tar, turpentine, rosin, and filled with inflammable and combustible materials, these barks were to be sent from Antwerp down the river in detachments of eight every half hour with the ebb tide. The object was to clear the way, if possible, of the raft, and to occupy the attention of the Spaniards, until the 'Fortune' and the 'Hope' should come down upon the bridge.

The 5th April, being the day following that on which the successful assault upon Liefkenshoek and Saint Anthony had taken place, was fixed for the descent of the fire-ships. So soon as it should be dark, the thirty-two lesser burning-vessels, under the direction of Admiral Jacob Jacobzoon, were to be sent forth from the neighborhood of the 'Boor's Sconce'—a fort close to the city walls—in accordance with the Italian's plan. "Run-a-way Jacob," however, or "Koppen Loppen," had earned no new laurels which could throw into the shade that opprobrious appellation. He was not one of Holland's naval heroes, but, on the whole, a very incompetent officer; exactly the man to damage the

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best concerted scheme which the genius of others could invent. Accordingly, Koppen-Loppen began with a grave mistake. Instead of allowing the precursory fire-ships to drift down the stream, at the regular intervals agreed upon, he despatched them all rapidly, and helter skelter, one after another, as fast as they could be set forth on their career. Not long afterwards, he sent the two "hell-burners," the 'Fortune' and the 'Hope,' directly in their wake. Thus the whole fiery fleet had set forth, almost at once, upon its fatal voyage.

It was known to Parma that preparations for an attack were making at Antwerp, but as to the nature of the danger he was necessarily in the dark. He was anticipating an invasion by a fleet from the city in combination with a squadron of Zeelanders coming up from below. So soon as the first vessels, therefore, with their trains not yet lighted, were discovered bearing down from the city, he was confirmed in his conjecture. His drums and trumpets instantly called to arms, and the whole body of his troops was mustered upon the bridge, the palisades, and in the nearest forts. Thus the preparations to avoid or to contend with the danger, were leading the Spaniards into the very jaws of destruction. Alexander, after crossing and recrossing the river, giving minute directions for repelling the expected assault, finally stationed himself in the block-house at the point of junction, on the Flemish side, between the palisade and the bridge of boats. He was surrounded by a group of superior officers, among whom Richebourg, Billy, Gaetano, Cessis, and the Englishman Sir Rowland Yorke, were conspicuous.

It was a dark, mild evening of early spring. As the fleet of vessels dropped slowly down the river, they suddenly became luminous, each ship flaming out of the darkness, a phantom of living fire. The very waves of the Scheldt seemed glowing with the conflagration, while its banks were lighted up with a preternatural glare. It was a wild, pompous, theatrical spectacle. The array of soldiers on both sides the river, along the dykes and upon the bridge, with banners

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waving, and spear and cuirass glancing in the lurid light; the demon fleet, guided by no human hand, wrapped in flames, and flitting through the darkness, with irregular movement, but portentous aspect, at the caprice of wind and tide; the death-like silence of expectation, which had succeeded the sound of trumpet and the shouts of the soldiers; and the weird glow which had supplanted the darkness—all combined with the sense of imminent and mysterious danger to excite and oppress the imagination.

Presently, the Spaniards, as they gazed from the bridge, began to take heart again. One after another, many of the lesser vessels drifted blindly against the raft, where they entangled themselves among the hooks and gigantic spear-heads, and burned slowly out without causing any extensive conflagration. Others grounded on the banks of the river, before reaching their destination. Some sank in the stream.

Last of all came the two infernal ships, swaying unsteadily with the current; the pilots of course, as they neared the bridge, having noiselessly effected their escape in the skiffs. The slight fire upon the deck scarcely illuminated the dark phantom-like hulls. Both were carried by the current clear of the raft, which, by a great error of judgment, as it now appeared, on the part of the builders, had only been made to protect the floating portion of the bridge. The 'Fortune' came first, staggering inside the raft, and then lurching clumsily against the dyke, and grounding near Kalloo, without touching the bridge. There was a moment's pause of expectation. At last the slow match upon the deck burned out, and there was a faint and partial explosion, by which little or no damage was produced.

Parma instantly called for volunteers to board the mysterious vessel. The desperate expedition was headed by the bold Roland York,[1] a Londoner, of whom one day there was more to be heard in Netherland history. The party sprang into the deserted and now harmless volcano, extinguishing the slight fires that were smouldering on the deck,

[1] Stowe. 'Chronicle of England,' ed. 1631, p. 700.

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and thrusting spears and long poles into the hidden recesses of the hold. There was, however, little time to pursue these perilous investigations, and the party soon made their escape to the bridge.

The troops of Parma, crowding on the palisade, and looking over the parapets, now began to greet the exhibition with peals of derisive laughter. It was but child's play, they thought, to threaten a Spanish army, and a general like Alexander Farnese, with such paltry fire-works as these. Nevertheless all eyes were anxiously fixed upon the remaining fire-ship, or "hell-burner," the 'Hope,' which had now drifted very near the place of its destination. Tearing her way between the raft and the shore, she struck heavily against the bridge on the Kalloo side, close to the block-house at the commencement of the floating portion of the bridge. A thin wreath of smoke was seen curling over a slight and smouldering fire upon her deck.

Marquis Richebourg, standing on the bridge, laughed loudly at the apparently impotent conclusion of the whole adventure. It was his last laugh on earth. A number of soldiers, at Parma's summons, instantly sprang on board this second mysterious vessel, and occupied themselves, as the party on board the 'Fortune' had done, in extinguishing the flames, and in endeavoring to ascertain the nature of the machine. Richebourg boldly directed from the bridge their hazardous experiments.

At the same moment a certain ensign De Vega, who stood near the Prince of Parma, close to the block-house, approached him with vehement entreaties that he should retire. Alexander refused to stir from the spot, being anxious to learn the result of these investigations. Vega, moved by some instinctive and irresistible apprehension, fell upon his knees, and plucking the General earnestly by the cloak, implored him with such passionate words and gestures to leave the place, that the Prince reluctantly yielded.

It was not a moment too soon. The clock-work in the 'Hope' had been better adjusted than the slow match in the

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'Fortune.' Scarcely had Alexander reached the entrance of Saint Mary's Fort, at the end of the bridge, when a horrible explosion was heard. The 'Hope' disappeared, together with the men who had boarded her, and the block-house, against which she had struck, with all its garrison, while a large portion of the bridge, with all the troops stationed upon it, had vanished into air. It was the work of a single instant. The Scheldt yawned to its lowest depth, and then cast its waters across the dykes, deep into the forts, and far over the land. The earth shook as with the throb of a volcano. A wild glare lighted up the scene for one moment, and was then succeeded by pitchy darkness. Houses were toppled down miles away, and not a living thing, even in remote places, could keep its feet. The air was filled with a rain of plough-shares, grave-stones, and marble balls, intermixed with the heads, limbs, and bodies, of what had been human beings. Slabs of granite, vomited by the flaming ship, were found afterwards at a league's distance, and buried deep in the earth. A thousand soldiers were destroyed in a second of time; many of them being torn to shreds, beyond even the semblance of humanity.

Richebourg disappeared, and was not found until several days later, when his body was discovered, doubled around an iron chain, which hung from one of the bridge-boats in the centre of the river. The veteran Robles, Seigneur de Billy, a Portuguese officer of eminent service and high military rank, was also destroyed. Months afterwards, his body was discovered adhering to the timber-work of the bridge, upon the ultimate removal of that structure, and was only recognized by a peculiar gold chain which he habitually wore. Parma himself was thrown to the ground, stunned by a blow on the shoulder from a flying stake. The page, who was behind him, carrying his helmet, fell dead without a wound, killed by the concussion of the air.

Several strange and less tragical incidents occurred. The Viscomte de Bruxelles was blown out of a boat on the Flemish side, and descended safe and sound into another in the centre

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of the stream. Captain Tucci, clad in complete armour, was whirled out of a fort, shot perpendicularly into the air, and and then fell back into the river. Being of a cool temperament, a good swimmer, and very pious, he skilfully divested himself of cuirass and helmet, recommended himself to the Blessed Virgin, and swam safely ashore. Another young officer of Parma's body-guard, François de Liege by name, standing on the Kalloo end of the bridge, rose like a feather into the clouds, and, flying quite across the river, alighted on the opposite bank with no further harm than a contused shoulder. He imagined himself (he said afterwards) to have been changed into a cannon-ball, as he rushed through the pitchy atmosphere, propelled by a blast of irresistible fury.[1]

It had been agreed that Admiral Jacobzoon should, immediately after the explosion of the fire-ships, send an eight-oared barge to ascertain the amount of damage. If a breach had been effected, and a passage up to the city opened, he was to fire a rocket. At this signal, the fleet stationed at Lillo, carrying a heavy armament, laden with provisions enough to relieve Antwerp from all anxiety, and ready to sail on the instant, was at once to force its way up the river.

The deed was done. A breach, two hundred feet in width, was made. Had the most skilful pilot in Zeeland held the helm of the 'Hope,' with a choice crew obedient to his orders, he could not have guided her more carefully than she had been directed by wind and tide. Avoiding the raft which lay in her way, she had, as it were, with the intelligence of a living creature, fulfilled the wishes of the daring genius that had created her; and laid herself alongside the bridge,

[1] The chief authorities used in the foregoing account of this famous enterprise are those already cited on a previous page, viz.: the MS. Letters of the Prince of Parma in the Archives of Simancas; Bor, ii. 596, 597; Strada, ii. 334 *seq.*; Meteren, xii. 223v°; Hoofd Vervolgh, 91; Baudartii Polemographia, ii. 24-27; Bentivoglio, P. ii. L. iii. 291; 292; Reyd, iv. 60; Martens and Torfs Gesch. v. Antw. v. 223 *seq.*; Papebrochi Ann. Antv. iv. 100 *seq.* et al.—I have not thought it necessary to cite them step by step; for all the accounts, with some inevitable and unimportant discrepancies, agree with each other. The most copious details are to be found in Strada and in Bor.

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exactly at the most telling point. She had then destroyed herself, precisely at the right moment. All the effects, and more than all, that had been predicted by the Mantuan wizard had come to pass. The famous bridge was cleft through and through, and a thousand picked men—Parma's very "daintiest"—were blown out of existence. The Governor-General himself was lying stark and stiff upon the bridge which he said should be his triumphal monument or his tomb. His most distinguished officers were dead, and all the survivors were dumb and blind with astonishment at the unheard-of convulsion. The passage was open for the fleet, and the fleet lay below with sails spread, and oars in the rowlocks, only waiting for the signal to bear up at once to the scene of action, to smite out of existence all that remained of the splendid structure, and to carry relief and triumph into Antwerp.

Not a soul slept in the city. The explosion had shook its walls, and thousands of people thronged the streets, their hearts beating high with expectation. It was a moment of exquisite triumph. The 'Hope,' word of happy augury, had not been relied upon in vain, and Parma's seven months of patient labour had been annihilated in a moment. Sainte Aldegonde and Gianibelli stood in the 'Boors' Sconce' on the edge of the river. They had felt and heard the explosion, and they were now straining their eyes through the darkness to mark the flight of the welcome rocket.

That rocket never rose. And it is enough, even after the lapse of three centuries, to cause a pang in every heart that beats for human liberty to think of the bitter disappointment which crushed these great and legitimate hopes. The cause lay in the incompetency and cowardice of the man who had been so unfortunately entrusted with a share in a noble enterprise.

Admiral Jacobzoon, paralyzed by the explosion, which announced his own triumph, sent off the barge, but did not wait for its return. The boatmen, too, appalled by the sights and sounds which they had witnessed, and by the murky

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darkness which encompassed them, did not venture near the scene of action, but, after rowing for a short interval hither and thither, came back with the lying report that nothing had been accomplished, and that the bridge remained unbroken. Sainte Aldegonde and Gianibelli were beside themselves with rage, as they surmised the imbecility of the Admiral, and devoted him in their hearts to the gallows, which he certainly deserved. The wrath of the keen Italian may be conceived, now that his ingenious and entirely successful scheme was thus rendered fruitless by the blunders of the incompetent Fleming.[1]

On the other side, there was a man whom no danger could appal. Alexander had been thought dead, and the dismay among his followers was universal. He was known to have been standing an instant before the explosion on the very block-house where the 'Hope' had struck. After the first terrible moments had passed, his soldiers found their general lying, as if in a trance, on the threshold of St. Mary's Fort, his drawn sword in his hand, with Cessis embracing his knees, and Gaetano extended at his side, stunned with a blow upon the head.[2]

Recovering from his swoon, Parma was the first to spring to his feet. Sword in hand, he rushed at once upon the bridge to mark the extent of the disaster. The admirable structure, the result of so much patient and intelligent energy, was fearfully shattered; the bridge, the river, and the shore, strewed with the mangled bodies of his soldiers. He expected, as a matter of certainty, that the fleet from below would instantly force its passage, destroy the remainder of his troops—stunned as they were with the sudden catastrophe—complete the demolition of the bridge, and then make its way to Antwerp, with ample reinforcements and supplies. And

[1] Bor, Hoofd, Meteren, *ubi supra*.

[2] Such is the picture minutely painted by Strada, ii. 342; and, although the Prince, in his own letters, written from the scene of action, and preserved in the Simancas Archives, omits the incident, yet I am inclined to rely upon the very ample materials possessed by the genial Jesuit, in the shape of private contemporary letters from Spanish officers engaged in the war—letters, alas, which have probably for ever disappeared.

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Alexander saw that the expedition would be successful. Momently expecting the attack, he maintained his courage and semblance of cheerfulness, with despair in his heart.

His winter's work seemed annihilated, and it was probable that he should be obliged to raise the siege. Nevertheless, he passed in person from rank to rank, from post to post, seeing that the wounded were provided for, encouraging those that remained unhurt, and endeavouring to infuse a portion of his own courage into the survivors of his panic-stricken army.

Nor was he entirely unsuccessful, as the night wore on and the expected assault was still delayed. Without further loss of time, he employed his men to collect the drifting boats, timber, and spar-work, and to make a hasty and temporary restoration—in semblance at least—of the ruined portion of his bridge. And thus he employed himself steadily all the night, although expecting every instant to hear the first broadside of the Zeeland cannon. When morning broke, and it became obvious that the patriots were unable or unwilling to follow up their own success, the Governor-General felt as secure as ever. He at once set about the thorough repairs of his great work, and—before he could be again molested—had made good the damage which it had sustained.[1]

It was not till three days afterwards that the truth was known in Antwerp. Hohenlo then sent down a messenger, who swam under the bridge, ascertained the exact state of affairs, and returned, when it was too late, with the first intelligence of the triumph which had been won and lost. The disappointment and mortification were almost intolerable. And thus had Run-a-way Jacob, 'Koppen Loppen,' blasted the hopes of so many wiser and braver spirits than his own.

The loss to Parma and to the royalist cause in Marquis Richebourg, was very great. The death of De Billy, who was a faithful, experienced, and courageous general, was also much lamented. "The misfortune from their death," said

[1] Bor, Strada, Meteren, Hoofd, Bentivoglio, Reyd, Mertens and Torps, Papebrochii Ann. (MS. Letters of Parma, *ubi supra*.

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Parma, "is not to be exaggerated. Each was ever ready to do his duty in your Majesty's service, and to save me much fatigue in all my various affairs. Nevertheless," continued the Prince, with great piety, "we give the Lord thanks for all, and take as a favour everything which comes from His hand."[1]

Alexander had indeed reason to deplore the loss of Robert de Melun, Viscount of Ghent, Marquis of Roubaix and Richebourg. He was a most valuable officer. His wealth was great. It had been recently largely increased by the confiscation of his elder brother's estates for his benefit, a measure which at Parma's intercession had been accorded by the King. That brother was the patriotic Prince of Espinoy, whom we have recently seen heading the legation of the States to France. And Richebourg was grateful to Alexander, for besides these fraternal spoils, he had received two marquisates through his great patron, in addition to the highest military offices. Insolent, overbearing, truculent to all the world, to Parma he was ever docile, affectionate, watchful, obsequious. A man who knew not fatigue, nor fear, nor remorse, nor natural affection, who could patiently superintend all the details of a great military work, or manage a vast political intrigue by alternations of brow-beating and bribery, or lead a forlorn hope, or murder a prisoner in cold blood, or leap into the blazing crater of what seemed a marine volcano, the Marquis of Richebourg had ever made himself most actively and unscrupulously useful to his master. Especially had he rendered invaluable services in the reduction of the Walloon Provinces, and in the bridging of the Scheldt, the two crowning triumphs of Alexander's life. He had now passed from the scene where he had played so energetic and dazzling a part, and lay doubled round an iron cable beneath the current of the restless river.

And in this eventful night, Parma, as always, had been true to himself and to his sovereign. "We expected," said he, "that the rebels would instantly attack us on all sides

[1] MS. Letter, 10 April, 1585, already cited.

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after the explosion. But all remained so astonished by the unheard-of accident, that very few understood what was going on. It seemed better that I—notwithstanding the risk of letting myself be seen—should encourage the people not to run away. I did so, and remedied matters a little but not so much as that—if the enemy had then attacked us—*we should not have been in the very greatest risk and peril.* I did not fail to do what I am obliged to do, and always hope to do; but I say no more of what passed, or what was done by myself, because it does not become me to speak of these things."[1]

Notwithstanding this discomfiture, the patriots kept up heart, and were incessantly making demonstrations against Parma's works. Their proceedings against the bridge, although energetic enough to keep the Spanish commander in a state of perpetual anxiety, were never so efficient however as on the memorable occasion when the Mantuan engineer and the Dutch watchmaker had exhausted all their ingenuity. Nevertheless, the rebel barks swarmed all over the submerged territory, now threatening this post, and now that, and effecting their retreat at pleasure; for nearly the whole of Parma's little armada was stationed at the two extremities of his bridge. Many fire-ships were sent down from time to time, but Alexander had organized a systematic patrol of a few sentry-boats, armed with scythes and hooks, which rowed up and down in front of the rafts, and protected them against invasion.

Some little effect was occasionally produced, but there was on the whole more anxiety excited than damage actually inflicted. The perturbation of spirit among the Spaniards when any of these 'demon fire-ships,' as they called them, appeared bearing down upon their bridge, was excessive. It could not be forgotten, that the 'Hope' had sent into space a thousand of the best soldiers of the little army within one moment of time. Such rapid proceedings had naturally left

[1] "—— y no dijo mas aqui de lo que entonces paso, y yo hice por no estarme bien tratar dello." (MS. letter before cited.)

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an uneasy impression on the minds of the survivors. The fatigue of watching was enormous. Hardly an officer or soldier among the besieging forces knew what it was to sleep. There was a perpetual exchanging of signals and beacon-fires and rockets among the patriots—not a day or night, when a concerted attack by the Antwerpers from above, and the Hollanders from below, with gun-boats and fire-ships, and floating mines, and other devil's enginry, was not expected.

"We are always upon the alert," wrote Parma, "with arms in our hands. Every one must mount guard, myself as well as the rest, almost every night, and the better part of every day."[1]

He was quite aware that something was ever in preparation; and the nameless, almost sickening apprehension which existed among his stout-hearted veterans, was a proof that the Mantuan's genius—notwithstanding the disappointment as to the great result—had not been exercised entirely in vain. The image of the Antwerp devil-ships imprinted itself indelibly upon the Spanish mind, as of something preternatural, with which human valour could only contend at a disadvantage; and a day was not very far distant—one of the memorable days of the world's history, big with the fate of England, Spain, Holland, and all Christendom—when the sight of a half-dozen blazing vessels, and the cry of "the Antwerp fire-ships," was to decide the issue of a most momentous enterprise. The blow struck by the obscure Italian against Antwerp bridge, although ineffective then, was to be most sensibly felt after a few years had passed, upon a wider field.

Meantime the uneasiness and the watchfulness in the besieging army were very exhausting. "They are never idle in the city," wrote Parma. "They are perpetually proving their obstinacy and pertinacity by their industrious genius and the machines which they devise. Every day we are expecting some new invention. On our side we endeavour to counteract their efforts by *every human means* in our power.

1 Parma to Philip, 6 May, 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.)

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Nevertheless, I confess that our merely *human intellect* is not competent to penetrate the designs *of their diabolical genius.* Certainly, most wonderful and extraordinary things have been exhibited, such as the oldest soldiers here have never before witnessed."[1]

Moreover, Alexander saw himself growing weaker and weaker. His force had dwindled to a mere phantom of an army. His soldiers, ill-fed, half-clothed, unpaid, were fearfully overworked. He was obliged to concentrate all the troops at his disposal around Antwerp. Diversions against Ostend, operations in Friesland and Gelderland, although most desirable, had thus been rendered quite impossible.

"I have recalled my cavalry and infantry from Ostend," he wrote, "and Don Juan de Manrique has fortunately arrived in Stabroek with a thousand good German folk. The commissary-general of the cavalry has come in, too, with a good lot of the troops that had been encamped in the open country. Nevertheless, we remain wretchedly weak—quite insufficient to attempt what ought to be done. If the enemy were more in force, or if the French wished to make trouble, your Majesty would see how important it had been to provide in time against such contingencies. And although our neighbours, crestfallen, and rushing upon their own destruction, leave us in quiet, we are not without plenty of work. It would be of inestimable advantage to make diversions in Gelderland and Friesland, because, in that case, the Hollanders, seeing the enemy so near their own borders, would be obliged to withdraw their assistance from Antwerp. 'Tis pity to see how few Spaniards your Majesty has left, and how diminished is our army. Now, also, is the time to expect sickness, and this affair of Antwerp is obviously stretching out into large proportions. Unless soon reinforced, we must inevitably go to destruction. I implore your Majesty to ponder the matter well, and not to defer the remedy."[2]

[1] "—— aunque confieso que nuestros ingenios no alcanzan ni penetran lo que los suyos diabolicos hazen, porque cierto se veen cosas estrañas y nuevas a lo que aseguran cuantos soldados viejos aqui hay." (Parma to Philip, 25 May, 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[2] MS. Letter, 10 April, 1585, before cited.

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His Majesty was sure to ponder the matter well, if that had been all. Philip was good at pondering; but it was equally certain that the remedy would be deferred. Meantime Alexander and his starving but heroic little army were left to fight their battles as they could.

His complaints were incessant, most reasonable, but unavailing. With all the forces he could muster, by withdrawing from the neighbourhood of Ghent, Brussels, Vilvoorde, and from all the garrisons, every man that could be spared, he had not strength enough to guard his own posts. To attempt to win back the important forts recently captured by the rebels on the Doel, was quite out of the question. The pictures he painted of his army were indeed most dismal. The Spaniards were so reduced by sickness that it was pitiful to see them. The Italians were not in much better condition, nor the Germans. "As for the Walloons," said he, "they are deserting, as they always do. In truth, one of my principal dangers is that the French civil wars are now tempting my soldiers across the frontier; the country there is so much richer, and offers so much more for the plundering."[1]

During the few weeks which immediately followed the famous descent of the 'Hope' and the 'Fortune,' there had accordingly been made a variety of less elaborate, but apparently mischievous, efforts against the bridge. On the whole, however, the object was rather to deceive and amuse the royalists, by keeping their attention fixed in that quarter, while a great attack was, in reality, preparing against the Kowenstyn. That strong barrier, as repeatedly stated, was even a more formidable obstacle than the bridge to the communication between the beleagured city and their allies upon the outside. Its capture and demolition, even at this late period, would open the navigation to all the fleets of Zeeland.

In the undertaking of the 5th of April all had been accomplished that human ingenuity could devise; yet the triumph had been snached away even at the very moment when it was complete. A determined and vigorous effort was soon to

[1] MS. Letter, Parma to Philip, 6 May, 1585.

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be made upon the Kowenstyn, in the very face of Parma; for it now seemed obvious that the true crisis was to come upon that fatal dyke. The great bulwark was three miles long. It reached from Stabroek in Brabant, near which village Mansfeld's troops were encamped, across the inundated country, up to the line of the Scheldt. Thence, along the river-dyke, and across the bridge to Kalloo and Beveren, where Parma's forces lay, was a continuous fortified road some three leagues in length; so that the two divisions of the besieging army, lying four leagues apart, were all connected by this important line.

Could the Kowenstyn be pierced, the water, now divided by that great bulwark into two vast lakes, would flow together in one continuous sea. Moreover the Scheldt, it was thought, would, in that case, return to its own channel through Brabant, deserting its present bed, and thus leaving the famous bridge high and dry. A wide sheet of navigable water would then roll between Antwerp and the Zeeland coasts, and Parma's bridge, the result of seven months' labour, would become as useless as a child's broken toy.

Alexander had thoroughly comprehended the necessity of maintaining the Kowenstyn. All that it was possible to do with the meagre forces at his disposal, he had done. He had fringed both its margins, along its whole length, with a breastwork of closely-driven stakes. He had strengthened the whole body of the dyke with timber-work and piles. Upon its river-end, just at the junction with the great Scheldt dyke, a strong fortress, called the Holy Cross, had been constructed, which was under the special command of Mondragon.[1] Besides this, three other forts had been built, at intervals of about a mile, upon the dyke. The one nearest to Mondragon was placed at the Kowenstyn manor-house, and was called Saint James. This was entrusted to Camillo Bourbon del Monte, an Italian officer, who boasted the blood royal of France in his veins, and was disposed on all occasions to vindicate that proud pedigree by his deeds.[2] The next fort

[1] Strada, II. 345, 346.

[2] De Thou, viii. 428.

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was Saint George's, sometimes called the Black Sconce. It had been built by La Motte, but it was now in command of the Spanish officer, Benites. The third was entitled the Fort of the Palisades, because it had been necessary to support it by a stockade-work in the water, there being absolutely not earth enough to hold the structure. It was placed in the charge of Captain Gamboa. These little castles had been created, as it were, out of water and upon water, and under a hot fire from the enemy's forts and fleets, which gave the pioneers no repose.[1]

"'Twas very hard work," said Parma, "our soldiers are so exposed during their labour, the rebels playing upon them perpetually from their musket-proof vessels. They fill the submerged land with their boats, skimming everywhere as they like, while we have none at all. We have been obliged to build these three forts with neither material nor space; making land enough for the foundation by bringing thither bundles of hurdles and of earth. The fatigue and anxiety are incredible. Not a man can sleep at night; not an officer nor soldier but is perpetually mounting guard. But they are animated to their hard work by seeing that I share in it, like one of themselves. We have now got the dyke into good order, so far as to be able to give them a warm reception, whenever they choose to come."[2]

Quite at the farther or land end of the Kowenstyn, was another fort, called the Stabroek, which commanded and raked the whole dyke, and was in the neighbourhood of Mansfeld's head-quarters.

Placed as were these little citadels upon a slender, and—at a brief distance—invisible thread of land, with the dark waters rolling around them far and near, they presented an unsubstantial dream-like aspect, seeming rather like castles floating between air and ocean than actual fortifications—a deceptive mirage rather than reality. There was nothing imaginary, however, in the work which they were to perform.

[1] Strada, II. 345, 346. Bor. II. 597, 598.

[2] Parma to Philip, 6 May, 1585. Archivo de Simancas MS.

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A series of attacks, some serious, others fictitious, had been made, from time to time, upon both bridge and dyke; but 7th May, 1585. Alexander was unable to inspire his soldiers with his own watchfulness. Upon the 7th of May a more determined attempt was made upon the Kowenstyn, by the fleet from Lillo. Hohenlo and Colonel Ysselstein conducted the enterprise. The sentinels at the point selected —having recently been so often threatened by an enemy, who most frequently made a rapid retreat, as to have grown weary and indifferent—were surprised, at dawn of day, and put to the sword. "If the truth must be told," said Parma, "the sentries were sound asleep." Five hundred Zeelanders, with a strong party of sappers and miners, fairly established themselves upon the dyke, between St. George's and Fort Palisade. The attack, although spirited at its commencement, was doomed to be unsuccessful. A co-operation, agreed upon by the fleet from Antwerp, failed through a misunderstanding. Sainte Aldegonde had stationed certain members of the munition-chamber in the cathedral tower, with orders to discharge three rockets, when they should perceive a beacon-fire which he should light in Fort Tholouse. The watchmen mistook an accidental camp-fire in the neighbourhood for the preconcerted signal, and sent up the rockets. Hohenlo understanding, accordingly, that the expedition was on the point of starting from Antwerp, hastened to perform his portion of the work, and sailed up from Lillo. He did his duty faithfully and well, and established himself upon the dyke, but found himself alone and without sufficient force to maintain his position. The Antwerp fleet never sailed. It was even whispered that the delinquency was rather intended than accidental; the Antwerpers being supposed desirous to ascertain the result of Hohenlo's attempt before coming forth to share his fate. Such was the opinion expressed by Farnese in his letters to Philip, but it seems probable that he was mistaken. Whatever the cause, however, the fact of the Zeelanders' discomfiture was certain. The St. George battery

[1] In Strada, II. 349.

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and that of the Palisade were opened at once upon them, the balls came plunging among the sappers and miners before they had time to throw up many spade-fulls of earth, and the whole party were soon dead or driven from the dyke. The survivors effected their retreat as they best could, leaving four of their ships behind them and three or four hundred men.

"Forty rebels lay dead on the dyke," said Parma, "and one hundred and fifty more, at least, were drowned. The enemy confess a much larger loss than the number I state, but I am not a friend of giving details larger than my ascertained facts; nor do I know how many were killed in the boats."[1]

This enterprise was but a prelude, however, to the great undertaking which had now been thoroughly matured. Upon the 26th May, another and most determined attack 26th May, 1585. was to be made upon the Kowenstyn, by the Antwerpers and Hollanders acting in concert. This time, it was to be hoped, there would be no misconception of signals. "It was a determination," said Parma, "so daring and desperate that there was no substantial reason why we should believe they would carry it out; but they were at last solemnly resolved to die or to effect their purpose."[2]

Two hundred ships in all had been got ready, part of them under Hohenlo and Justinus de Nassau, to sail up from Zeeland; the others to advance from Antwerp under Sainte Aldegonde. Their destination was the Kowenstyn Dyke. Some of the vessels were laden with provisions, others with gabions, hurdles, branches, sacks of sand and of wool, and with other materials for the rapid throwing up of fortifications.

It was two o'clock, half an hour before the chill dawn of a May morning, Sunday, the 26th of the month. The pale light of a waning moon was faintly perceptible in the sky. Suddenly the sentinels upon the Kowenstyn—this time not

[1] Parma to Philip II., 25 May, 1585, 'Arch. de Sim. MS.' Compare Bor, II. 598, 599. Strada, 348, 349. Le Petit, II. 512. Meteren, xii. 224. Bentivoglio, p. 11, l. iii. 294.

[2] Parma to Philip II., 26 May, 1585. 'Arch. de Sim. MS.'

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asleep—descried, as they looked towards Lillo, four fiery apparitions gliding towards them across the waves. The alarm was given, and soon afterwards the Spaniards began to muster, somewhat reluctantly, upon the dyke, filled as they always were with the mysterious dread which those demon-vessels never failed to inspire.

The fire-ships floated slowly nearer, and at last struck heavily against the stockade-work. There, covered with tar, pitch, rosin, and gunpowder, they flamed, flared, and exploded, during a brief period, with much vigour, and then burned harmlessly out. One of the objects for which they had been sent—to set fire to the palisade—was not accomplished. The other was gained; for the enemy, expecting another volcanic shower of tombstones and plough-coulters, and remembering the recent fate of their comrades on the bridge, had retired shuddering into the forts. Meantime, in the glare of these vast torches, a great swarm of gunboats and other vessels, skimming across the leaden-coloured waters, was seen gradually approaching the dyke. It was the fleet of Hohenlo and Justinus de Nassau, who had been sailing and rowing since ten o'clock of the preceding night. The burning ships lighted them on their way, while it had scared the Spaniards from their posts.

The boats ran ashore in the mile-long space between forts St. George and the Palisade, and a party of Zeelanders, Admiral Haultain, governor of Walcheren, at their head, sprang upon the dyke. Meantime, however, the royalists, finding that the fire-ships had come to so innocent an end, had rallied and emerged from their forts. Haultain and his Zeelanders, by the time they had fairly mounted the dyke, found themselves in the iron embrace of several hundred Spaniards. After a brief fierce struggle, face to face, and at push of pike, the patriots reeled backward down the bank, and took refuge in their boats. Admiral Haultain slipped as he left the shore, missed a rope's end which was thrown to him, fell into the water, and, borne down by the weight of his armour, was drowned. The enemy, pursuing them, sprang to the waist in

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the ooze on the edge of the dyke, and continued the contest. The boats opened a hot fire, and there was a severe skirmish for many minutes, with no certain result. It was, however, beginning to go hard with the Zeelanders, when, just at the critical moment, a cheer from the other side of the dyke was heard, and the Antwerp fleet was seen coming swiftly to the rescue. The Spaniards, taken between the two bands of assailants, were at a disadvantage, and it was impossible to prevent the landing of these fresh antagonists. The Antwerpers sprang ashore. Among the foremost was Sainte Aldegonde,[1]—poet, orator, hymn-book maker, burgomaster, lawyer, polemical divine—now armed to the teeth and cheering on his men, in the very thickest of the fight. The diversion was successful, and Sainte Aldegonde gallantly drove the Spaniards quite off the field. The whole combined force from Antwerp and Zeeland now effected their landing. Three thousand men occupied all the space between Fort George and the Palisade.

With Sainte Aldegonde came the unlucky Koppen Loppen, and all that could be spared of the English and Scotch troops in Antwerp, under Balfour and Morgan. With Hohenlo and Justinus de Nassau came Reinier Kant, who had just succeeded Paul Buys as Advocate of Holland. Besides these came two other men, side by side, perhaps in the same boat, of whom the world was like to hear much, from that time forward, and whose names are to be most solemnly linked together, so long as Netherland history shall endure; one, a fair-faced flaxen-haired boy of eighteen, the other a square-visaged, heavy-browed man of forty—Prince Maurice[2] and John of Olden-Barneveldt. The statesman had

[1] "Monsr. Ste. Aldegonde being one of the first." Letter of Capt. Thomas James to Walsingham, $\frac{16}{26}$ May, 1585, S. P. Office MS. The English soldier had no remarkable talent for description, but he had been fighting all day on the dyke, and sent off a rough account of the business, the same night, to England.

[2] "The Count Maurice, with divers of the States, was here," says Capt. James, in the letter above cited.

There is a doubt as to Olden-Barneveldt's presence. My authority, in stating the fact, rested on a contemporaneous MS., but the note has unluckily been lost. The common biographers of the great advocate, and the contemporary historians, are silent as to the fact, if it be one. It is certain, however, that many members of

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been foremost to urge the claim of William the Silent's son upon the stadholderate of Holland and Zeeland, and had been, as it were, the youth's political guardian. He had himself borne arms more than once before, having shouldered his matchlock under Batenburg, and marched on that officer's spirited but disastrous expedition for the relief of Haarlem. But this was the life of those Dutch rebels. Quill-driving, law-expounding, speech-making, diplomatic missions, were intermingled with very practical business in besieged towns or open fields, with Italian musketeers and Spanish pikemen. And here, too, young Maurice was taking his first solid lesson in the art of which he was one day to be so distinguished a professor. It was a sharp beginning. Upon this ribband of earth, scarce six paces in breadth, with miles of deep water on both sides—a position recently fortified by the first general of the age, and held by the famous infantry of Spain and Italy—there was likely to be no prentice-work.

To assault such a position was in truth, as Alexander had declared it to be, a most daring and desperate resolution on the part of the States. "Soldiers, citizens, and all," said Parma, "they are obstinate as dogs to try their fortune."[1]

With wool-sacks, sand-bags, hurdles, planks, and other materials brought with them, the patriots now rapidly entrenched themselves in the position so brilliantly gained; while, without deferring for an instant the great purpose which they had come to effect, the sappers and miners fastened upon the iron-bound soil of the dyke, tearing it with pick, mattock, and shovel, digging, delving, and throwing up the earth around them, busy as human beavers, instinctively engaged in a most congenial task.

But the beavers did not toil unmolested. The large and determined force of Antwerpers and English, Hollanders and Zeelanders, guarded the fortifications as they were rapidly rising, and the pioneers as they were so manfully delving;

the States-General came up in Hohenlo's fleet, and it was not likely that Barneveldt would stay behind. His presence is distinctly stated by some one, but the reader is at liberty to be incredulous if he choose.

[1] Parma to Philip II. 6 June, 1585, 'Arch. de Sim. MS.'

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but the enemy was not idle. From Fort Saint James, next beyond Saint George, Camillo del Monte led a strong party to the rescue. There was a tremendous action, foot to foot, breast to breast, with pike and pistol, sword and dagger. Never since the beginning of the war had there been harder fighting than now upon that narrow isthmus. "'Twas an affair of most brave obstinacy on both sides," said Parma, who rarely used strong language. "Soldiers, citizens, and all—they were like mad bulldogs."[1] Hollanders, Italians, Scotchmen, Spaniards, Englishmen, fell thick and fast. The contest was about the entrenchments before they were completed, and especially around the sappers and miners, in whose picks and shovels lay the whole fate of Antwerp. Many of the dyke-breakers were digging their own graves, and rolled, one after another, into the breach which they were so obstinately creating. Upon that slender thread of land the hopes of many thousands were hanging. To tear it asunder, to roll the ocean-waves up to Antwerp, and thus to snatch the great city triumphantly from the grasp of Philip—to accomplish this, the three thousand had come forth that May morning. To prevent it, to hold firmly that great treasure entrusted to them, was the determination of the Spaniards. And so, closely pent and packed, discharging their carbines into each other's faces, rolling, coiled together, down the slimy sides of the dyke into the black waters, struggling to and fro, while the cannon from the rebel fleet and from the royal forts mingled their roar with the sharp crack of the musketry, Catholics and patriots contended for an hour, while still, through all the confusion and uproar, the miners dug and delved.

At last the patriots were victorious. They made good their entrenchments, drove the Spaniards, after much slaughter, back to the fort of Saint George on the one side, and of the Palisade on the other, and cleared the whole space between the two points. The centre of the dyke was theirs; the great Kowenstyn, the only key by which the gates of Antwerp

[1] Same to same, 26 May, 1585, MS.

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could be unlocked, was in the deliverers' hands. They pursued their victory, and attacked the Palisade Fort. Gamboa, its commandant, was severely wounded; many other officers dead or dying; the outworks were in the hands of the Hollanders; the slender piles on which the fortress rested in the water were rudely shaken; the victory was almost complete.

And now there was a tremendous cheer of triumph. The beavers had done their work, the barrier was bitten through and through, the salt water rushed like a river through the ruptured dyke. A few moments later, and a Zeeland barge, freighted with provisions, floated triumphantly into the waters beyond, now no longer an inland sea. The deed was done—the victory achieved. Nothing more was necessary than to secure it, to tear the fatal barrier to fragments, to bury it, for its whole length, beneath the waves. Then, after the isthmus had been utterly submerged, when the Scheldt was rolled back into its ancient bed, when Parma's famous bridge had become useless, when the maritime communication between Antwerp and Holland had been thoroughly established, the Spaniards would have nothing left for it but to drown like rats in their entrenchments or to abandon the siege in despair. All this was in the hands of the patriots. The Kowenstyn was theirs. The Spaniards were driven from the field, the batteries of their forts silenced. For a long period the rebels were unmolested, and felt themselves secure.[1]

"We remained thus some three hours," says Captain James, an English officer who fought in the action, and described it in rough, soldierly fashion to Walsingham the same day, "thinking all things to be secure."[2] Yet in the very supreme moment of victory, the leaders, both of the Hollanders and of the Antwerpers, proved themselves incompetent to their

[1] Meteren, xii. 224. Bor, II. 599, 600. Hoofd Vervolgh, 97-99, *seq.* Bentivoglio, P. II. L. III. 297, *seq.* Strada, II. 354-367. Baudartii, 'Polemographia,' II. 27-30. Le Petit, II. 514. Capt. T. James to Walsingham, $\frac{16}{26}$ May, 1585, S. P. Office MS. Gilpin to Walsingham, $\frac{17}{27}$ May, 1585, S. P. Office MS. Parma to Philip II., 26 May and 6 June, 1585, 'Archivo de Simancas MS.'

[2] MS. Letter before cited.

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position. With deep regret it must be admitted, that not only the reckless Hohenlo, but the all-accomplished Sainte Aldegonde, committed the gravest error. In the hour of danger, both had comported themselves with perfect courage and conduct. In the instant of triumph, they gave way to puerile exultation. With a celerity as censurable as it seems incredible, both these commanders sprang into the first barge which had thus floated across the dyke, in order that they might, in person, carry the news of the victory to Antwerp, and set all the bells ringing and the bonfires blazing. They took with them Ferrante Spinola, a mortally-wounded Italian officer of rank, as a trophy of their battle, and a boat-load of beef and flour, as an earnest of the approaching relief.[1]

While the conquerors were thus gone to enjoy their triumph, the conquered, though perplexed and silenced, were not yet disposed to accept their defeat. They were even ignorant that they were conquered. They had been forced to abandon the field, and the patriots had entrenched themselves upon the dyke, but neither Fort Saint George nor the Palisade had been carried, although the latter was in imminent danger.

Old Count Peter Ernest Mansfeld—a grizzled veteran, who had passed his childhood, youth, manhood, and old age, under fire—commanded at the land-end of the dyke, in the fortress of Stabroek, in which neighbourhood his whole division was stationed. Seeing how the day was going, he called a council of war. The patriots had gained a large section of the dyke. So much was certain. Could they succeed in utterly demolishing that bulwark in the course of the day? If so, how were they to be dislodged before their work was perfected? It was difficult to assault their position. Three thousand Hollanders, Antwerpers, Englishmen—"mad bull-dogs all," as Parma called them—showing their teeth very mischievously, with one hundred and sixty Zeeland vessels throwing in their broadsides from both margins of the dyke, were a formidable company to face.

"Oh for one half hour of Alexander in the field!" sighed

[1] Meteren, Bor, Hoofd, Strada, *ubi sup.*

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one of the Spanish officers in council. But Alexander was more than four leagues away, and it was doubtful whether he even knew of the fatal occurrence. Yet how to send him a messenger. Who could reach him through that valley of death? Would it not be better to wait till nightfall? Under the cover of darkness something might be attempted, which in the daylight would be hopeless. There was much anxiety, and much difference of opinion had been expressed, when Camillo Capizucca, colonel of the Italian Legion, obtained a hearing. A man bold in words as in deeds, he vehemently denounced the pusillanimity which would wait either for Parma or for nightfall. "What difference will it make," he asked, "whether we defer our action until either darkness or the General arrives? In each case we give the enemy time enough to destroy the dyke, and thoroughly to relieve the city. That done, what good can be accomplished by our arms? Then our disheartened soldiers will either shrink from a fruitless combat or march to certain death." Having thus, very warmly but very sagaciously, defined the position in which all were placed, he proceeded to declare that he claimed, neither for himself nor for his legion, any superiority over the rest of the army. He knew not that the Italians were more to be relied upon than others in the time of danger, but this he did know, that no man in the world was so devoted as he was to the Prince of Parma. To show that devotion by waiting with folded arms behind a wall until the Prince should arrive to extricate his followers, was not in his constitution. He claimed the right to lead his Italians against the enemy at once—in the front rank, if others chose to follow; alone, if the rest preferred to wait till a better leader should arrive.[1]

The words of the Italian colonel sent a thrill through all who heard him. Next in command under Capizucca was his camp-marshal, an officer who bore the illustrious name of Piccolomini—father of the Duke Ottavio, of whom so much was to be heard at a later day throughout the fell scenes of that portion of the eighty years' tragedy now enacting, which was

[1] Strada, II. 357, 358, *seq.*

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to be called the Thirty Years' War of Germany. The camp-marshal warmly seconded the proposition of his colonel. Mansfeld, pleased with such enthusiasm among his officers, yielded to their wishes, which were, in truth, his own. Six companies of the Italian Legion were in his encampment, while the remainder were stationed, far away, upon the bridge, under command of his son, Count Charles. Early in the morning, before the passage across the dyke had been closed, the veteran condottiere, pricking his ears as he snuffed the battle from afar, had contrived to send a message to his son.

"Charles, my boy," were his words, "to-day we must either beat them or burst."[1]

Old Peter Ernest felt that the long-expected, long-deferred assault was to be made that morning in full force, and that it was necessary for the royalists, on both bridge and dyke, to hold their own. Piccolomini now drew up three hundred of his Italians, picked veterans all, and led them in marching order to Mansfeld. That general at the same moment, received another small but unexpected reinforcement. A portion of the Spanish Legion, which had long been that of Pedro Pacchi, lay at the extreme verge of the Stabroek encampment, several miles away. Aroused by the distant cannonading, and suspecting what had occurred, Don Juan d'Aquila, the colonel in command, marched without a moment's delay to Mansfeld's head-quarters, at the head of all the force he could muster—about two hundred strong. With him came Cardona, Gonzales de Castro, Toralva, and other distinguished officers. As they arrived, Capizucca was just setting forth for the field. There arose a dispute for precedence between the Italians and the Spaniards. Capizucca had first demanded the privilege of leading what seemed a forlorn hope, and was unwilling to yield his claim to the new comer. On the other hand, the Spaniards were not disposed to follow where they felt entitled to lead. The quarrel was growing warm, when Aquila, seizing his Italian rival by the hand, pro-

[1] Charles, mon fils, il te faut vaincre ou crever." Le Petit, II. 514.

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tested that it was not a moment for friends to wrangle for precedence.

"Shoulder to shoulder," said he, "let us go into this business, and let our blows rather fall on our enemies' heads than upon each other's." This terminated the altercation. The Italians and Spaniards—in battle array as they were—all dropped on their knees, offered a brief prayer to the Holy Virgin, and then, in the best possible spirits, set forth along the dyke. Next to fort Stabroek—whence they issued—was the Palisade Fort, nearly a mile removed, which the patriots had nearly carried, and between which and St. George, another mile farther on, their whole force was established.[1]

The troops under Capizucca and Aquila soon reached the Palisade, and attacked the besiegers, while the garrison, cheered by the unexpected relief, made a vigorous sortie. There was a brief sharp contest, in which many were killed on both sides; but at last the patriots fell back upon their own entrenchments, and the fort was saved. Its name was instantly changed to Fort Victory, and the royalists then prepared to charge the fortified camp of the rebels, in the centre of which the dyke-cutting operations were still in progress. At the same moment, from the opposite end of the bulwark, a cry was heard along the whole line of the dyke. From Fort Holy Cross, at the Scheldt end, the welcome intelligence was suddenly communicated—as if by a magnetic impulse—that Alexander was in the field.[2]

It was true. Having been up half the night, as usual, keeping watch along his bridge, where he was ever expecting a fatal attack, he had retired for a few hours' rest in his camp at Beveren. Aroused at day-break by the roar of the cannon, he had hastily thrown on his armour, mounted his horse, and, at the head of two hundred pikemen, set forth for the scene of action. Detained on the bridge by a detachment of the Antwerp fleet, which had been ordered to make a diversion in that quarter, he had, after beating off their vessels with his boat-artillery, and charging Count Charles Mansfeld to heed

[1] Strada, *ubi sup.* [2] Ibid.

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well the brief injunction of old Peter Ernest, made all the haste he could to the Kowenstyn. Arriving at Fort Holy Cross, he learned from Mondragon how the day was going. Three thousand rebels, he learned, were established on the dyke, Fort Palisade was tottering, a fleet from both sides was cannonading the Spanish entrenchments, the salt water was flowing across the breach already made. His seven months' work, it seemed, had come to nought. The navigation was already open from the sea to Antwerp, the Kowenstyn was in the rebels' hands. But Alexander was not prone to premature despair. "I arrived," said he to Philip in a letter written on the same evening, "at the very nick of time."[1] A less hopeful person might have thought that he had arrived several hours too late. Having brought with him every man that could be spared from Beveren and from the bridge, he now ordered Camillo del Monte to transport some additional pieces of artillery from Holy Cross and from Saint James to Fort Saint George. At the same time a sharp cannonade was to be maintained upon the rebel fleet from all the forts.[2]

Mondragon, with a hundred musketeers and pikemen, was sent forward likewise as expeditiously as possible to Saint George. No one could be more alert. The battered veteran, hero of some of the most remarkable military adventures that history has ever recorded,[3] fought his way on foot, in the midst of the fray, like a young ensign who had his first laurels to win. And, in truth, the day was not one for cunning manœuvres, directed, at a distance, by a skillful tactician. It was a brisk close contest, hand to hand and eye to eye—a Homeric encounter, in which the chieftains were to prove a right to command by their personal prowess. Alexander, descending suddenly—dramatically, as it were—when the battle seemed lost—like a deity from the clouds—was to justify, by the strength of his arm, the enthusiasm which his name always awakened. Having, at a glance, taken in the

[1] MS. Letter before cited. "Llegue a la mayor conjuntura del mundo que fue quando se habia comenzado el fuego."

[2] Strada, *ubi sup.*

[3] See 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' vol. ii. chap. iii., and vol. iii. chap. iii.

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whole situation, he made his brief arrangements, going from rank to rank, and disposing his troops in the most effective manner. He said but few words, but his voice had always a telling effect.

"The man who refuses, this day, to follow me," he said, "has never had regard to his own honour, nor has God's cause or the King's ever been dear to his heart."[1]

His disheartened Spaniards and Italians—roused as by a magic trumpet—eagerly demanded to be led against the rebels. And now from each end of the dyke, the royalists were advancing toward the central position occupied by the patriots. While Capizucca and Aquila were occupied at Fort Victory, Parma was steadily cutting his way from Holy Cross to Saint George. On foot, armed with sword and shield, and in coat of mail, and marching at the head of his men along the dyke, surrounded by Bevilacqua, Bentivoglio, Manriquez, Sforza, and other officers of historic name and distinguished courage, now upon the summit of the causeway, now on its shelving banks, now breast-high in the waters, through which lay the perilous path, contending at every inch with the scattered bands of the patriots, who slowly retired to their entrenched camp, and with the Antwerp and Zeeland vessels, whose balls tore through the royalist ranks, the General at last reached Saint George. On the preservation of that post depended the whole fortune of the day, for Parma had already received the welcome intelligence that the Palisade—now Fort Victory—had been regained. He instantly ordered an outer breast-work of wool-sacks and sand-bags to be thrown up in front of Saint George, and planted a battery to play point-blank at the enemy's entrenchments. Here the final issue was to be made.

The patriots and Spaniards were thus all enclosed in the mile-long space between St. George and the Palisade. Upon that narrow strip of earth, scarce six paces in width, more than five thousand men met in mortal combat—a narrow arena for so many gladiators, hemmed in on both sides by the sea. The

[1] Strada, II. 360.

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patriots had, with solemn ceremony, before starting upon their enterprise, vowed to destroy the dyke and relieve Antwerp, or to perish in the attempt. They were true to their vow. Not the ancient Batavians or Nervii had ever manifested more tenacity against the Roman legions than did their descendants against the far-famed Spanish infantry upon this fatal day. The fight on the Kowenstyn was to be long remembered in the military annals of Spain and Holland. Never, since the curtain first rose upon the great Netherland tragedy, had there been a fiercer encounter.[1] Flinching was impossible. There was scant room for the play of pike and dagger, and, close packed as were the combatants, the dead could hardly fall to the ground. It was a mile-long series of separate mortal duels, and the oozy dyke was soon slippery with blood.

From both sides, under Capizucca and Aquila on the one hand, and under Alexander on the other, the entrenchments of the patriots were at last assaulted, and as the royalists fell thick and fast beneath the breast-work which they were storming, their comrades clambered upon their bodies, and attempted, from such vantage-ground, to effect an entrance. Three times the invaders were beaten back with heavy loss, and after each repulse the attack was renewed with fresh vigour, while within the entrenchments the pioneers still plied the pick and shovel, undismayed by the uproar around them.

A fourth assault, vigorously made, was cheerfully repelled by the Antwerpers and Hollanders, clustering behind their breast-works, and looking steadily into their enemies' eyes. Captain Heraugiere—of whom more was to be heard one day—had led two hundred men into action, and now found himself at the head of only thirteen.[2] The loss had been as severe among many other patriot companies, as well as in the Spanish ranks, and again the pikemen of Spain and Italy faltered before the iron visages and cordial blows of the Hollanders.

[1] "Mihi tanto accuratius dicendum," says Strada, "quanto rarò alias in Belgio, audaciore loco, aut fallacioris alternatione victoriae, aut nobilioribus audentium exemplis, aut præsentiore caelitum ope, dimicatum est, &c. II. 349.

[2] Meteren, *ubi sup.*

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This work had lasted a good hour and a half, when at last, on the fifth assault, a wild and mysterious apparition renewed the enthusiasm of the Spaniards. The figure of the dead commander of the old Spanish Legion, Don Pedro Pacchi, who had fallen a few months before at the siege of Dendermonde, was seen charging in front of his regiment, clad in his well-known armour, and using the gestures which had been habitual with him in life.[1] No satisfactory explanation was ever made of this singular delusion, but it was general throughout the ranks, and in that superstitious age was as effective as truth. The wavering Spaniards rallied once more under the guidance of their phantom leader, and again charged the breast-work of the patriots. Toralva, mounting upon the back of one of his soldiers, was first to vault into the entrenchments. At the next instant he lay desperately wounded on the ground, but was close followed by Capizucca, sustained by a determined band. The entrenchment was carried, but the furious conflict still continued. At nearly the same moment, however, several of the patriot vessels were observed to cast off their moorings, and to be drifting away from the dyke. A large number of the rest had been disabled by the hot fire, which by Alexander's judicious orders had been directed upon the fleet. The ebbing tide left no choice to the commander of the others but to retreat or to remain and fall into the enemy's hands, should he gain the day. Had they risked the dangerous alternative, it might have ensured the triumph of the whole enterprise, while their actual decision proved most disastrous in the end.

"We have conquered," cried Alexander, stretching his arm towards the receding waters. "The sea deserts the impious heretics. Strike from them now their last hope, and cut off their retreat to the departing ships."[2] The Spaniards were not slow to perceive their advantage, while the courage of the patriots at last began to ebb with the tide. The day was lost. In the hour of transitory triumph the leaders of the expedition had turned their backs on their followers, and now, after

[1] Strada, II. 364.

[2] Strada, II. 365.

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so much heroism had been exhibited, fortune too had averted her face. The grim resistance changed to desperate panic, and a mad chase began along the blood-stained dyke. Some were slain with spear and bullet, others were hunted into the sea, many were smothered in the ooze along the edge of the embankment. The fugitives, making their way to the retreating vessels, were pursued by the Spaniards, who swam after them, with their swords in their teeth, and engaged them in mortal combat in the midst of the waves.

"And so we cut all their throats," said Parma, "the rebels on every side remaining at our mercy, and I having no doubt that my soldiers would avenge the loss of their friends."[1]

The English and the Scotch, under Balfour and Morgan, were the very last to abandon the position which they had held so manfully seven hours long. Honest Captain James, who fought to the last, and described the action the same night in the fewest possible words, was of opinion that the fleet had moved away only to obtain a better position. "They put off to have more room to play on the enemy," said he; "but the Hollanders and Zeelanders, seeing the enemy come on so hotly, and thinking our galleys would leave them, abandoned their string. The Scots, seeing them to retire, left their string. The enemy pursued very hotly; the Englishmen stood to repulse, and are put most to the sword. In this shameful retreat there were slain or drowned to the number of two thousand."[2] The blunt Englishman was justly indignant that an enterprise, so nearly successful, had been ruined by the desertion of its chiefs. "We had cut the dyke in three places," said he; "*but left it most shamefully for want of commandment.*"[3]

Poor Koppen Loppen—whose blunders on former occasions had caused so much disaster—was now fortunate enough to expiate them by a soldier's death. Admiral Haultain had, as we have seen, been drowned at the commencement of the

[1] "Y asi los degollaron a todos, quedando por una parte y otra a nuestra misericordia, y yo fiador que vengaron la perdida de los amigos." Parma to Philip II., May 26, 1585, MS.

[2] James to Walsingham, MS. before cited.

[3] Ibid.

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action.[1] Justinus de Nassau, at its close, was more successful in his retreat to the ships. He, too, sprang into the water when the overthrow was absolute; but, alighting in some shallows, was able to conceal himself among weeds and water-lilies till he had divested himself of his armour, when he made his escape by swimming to a boat, which conveyed him to Lillo. Roelke van Deest, an officer of some note, was so horribly wounded in the face, that he was obliged to wear a mask for the remainder of his life.[2]

Parma, overjoyed at his victory, embraced Capizucca before the whole army, with warm expressions of admiration for his conduct. Both the Italian colonel and his Spanish rival Aquila were earnestly recommended to Philip for reward and promotion. The wounded Toralva was carried to Alexander's own quarters, and placed in Alexander's own bed, where he remained till his recovery, and was then presented—a distinction which he much valued—with the armour which the Prince had worn on the day of the battle.[3] Parma himself, so soon as the action was concluded, went with his chief officers straight from the field to the little village-church of Stabroek, where he fell upon his knees and offered up fervent thanks for his victory. He next set about repairing the ruptured dyke, damaged in many places but not hopelessly ruined, and for this purpose the bodies of the rebels, among other materials, were cast by hundreds into the ditches which their own hands had dug.[4]

Thus ended the eight hours' fight on the Kowenstyn. "The feast lasted from seven to eight hours," said Parma, "with the most brave obstinacy on both sides that has been seen for many a long day."[5] A thousand royalists were killed and twice as many patriots, and the issue of the conflict was most uncertain up to the very last.

[1] This appears from the letter of Captain James. The other accounts describe the death of the Admiral as occurring in the general rout at the close of the battle.

[2] Van Wyn op Wagenaar, viii. 40.

[3] Strada, II. 364.

[4] Ibid. 367.

[5] "Y habiendo durado esta fiesta, obra de 7 o 8 hore, con la mas brava obstinacion de entrambas partes que se ha visto hartos dias ha." Parma to Philip II., MS. before cited.

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"Our loss is greater than I wish it was," wrote Alexander to Philip: "It was a very close thing, and I have never been more anxious in my life as to the result for your Majesty's service. The whole fate of the battle was hanging all the time by a thread."[1] More than ever were reinforcements necessary, and it was only by a miracle that the victory had at last been gained with such slender resources. "'Tis a large, long, laborious, expensive, and most perilous war," said Parma, when urging the claims of Capizucca and Aquila, "for we have to fight every minute; and there are no castles and other rewards, so that if soldiers are not to have promotion, they will lose their spirit."[2] Thirty-two of the rebel vessels grounded, and fell into the hands of the Spaniards, who took from them many excellent pieces of artillery. The result was most conclusive and most disheartening for the patriots.

Meantime—as we have seen—Hohenlo and Sainte Aldegonde had reached Antwerp in breathless haste to announce their triumph. They had been met on the quay by groups of excited citizens, who eagerly questioned the two generals arriving thus covered with laurels from the field of battle, and drank with delight all the details of the victory. The poor dying Spinola was exhibited in triumph, the boat-load of breadstuffs received with satisfaction, and vast preparations were made to receive, on wharves and in storehouses, the plentiful supplies about to arrive. Beacons and bonfires were lighted, the bells from all the steeples rang their merriest peals, cannon thundered in triumph not only in Antwerp itself, but subsequently at Amsterdam and other more distant cities. In due time a magnificent banquet was spread in the town-house to greet the conquering Hohenlo. Immense gratification was expressed by those of the reformed religion; dire threats were

[1] "De los nuestros tambien han quedado mas de los que yo quisiera—ha sido pendencia tan reñida—que hartas veces ha puesto harto mas cuidado el ver termino en que estaba el servicio de V. M. Todo esto ha estado colgado de un hilo." Parma to Philip II. MS. before cited.

[2] "Guerra larga, trabajosa, costosa, y muy peligrosa, pues sempre se trata de pelear, y que no se hay castillos ni otros premios," &c. (Ibid.)

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uttered against the Catholics. Some were for hanging them all out of hand, others for throwing them into the Scheldt; the most moderate proposed packing them all out of town so soon as the siege should be raised—an event which could not now be delayed many days longer.

Hohenlo, placed on high at the head of the banquet-table, assumed the very god of war. Beside and near him sat the loveliest dames of Antwerp, rewarding his bravery with their brightest smiles. The Count drained huge goblets to their health, to the success of the patriots, and to the confusion of the royalists, while, as he still drank and feasted, the trumpet, kettle-drum, and cymbal, and merry peal of bell without, did honour to his triumph. So gay and gallant was the victor, that he announced another banquet on the following day, still further to celebrate the happy release of Antwerp, and invited the fair ladies around him again to grace the board. It is recorded that the gentlewoman next him responded with a sigh, that, if her presentiments were just, the morrow would scarcely be so joyful as the present day had been, and that she doubted whether the triumph were not premature.[1]

Hardly had she spoken when sinister sounds were heard in the streets. The first few stragglers, survivors of the deadly fight, had arrived with the fatal news that all was lost, the dyke regained, the Spaniards victorious, the whole band of patriots cut to pieces. A few frightfully-wounded and dying sufferers were brought into the banqueting-hall. Hohenlo sprang from the feast—interrupted in so ghastly a manner—pursued by shouts and hisses. Howls of execration saluted him in the streets, and he was obliged to conceal himself for a time, to escape the fury of the populace.[2]

On the other hand, Parma was, not unnaturally, overjoyed at the successful issue to the combat, and expressed himself on the subject in language of (for him) unusual exultation. "To-day, Sunday, 26th of June," said he, in a letter to Philip, despatched by special courier on the very same night, "the

[1] Mertens en Torps, v. 242.
[2] Ibid. Compare Bor, Meteren, Hoofd, et al., *ubi sup.*

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Lord has been pleased to grant to your Majesty a great and most signal victory. In this conjuncture of so great importance it may be easily conceived that the best results that can be desired will be obtained if your Majesty is now ready to do what is needful. I congratulate your Majesty very many times on this occasion, and I desire to render infinite thanks to Divine Providence." [1]

He afterwards proceeded, in a rapid and hurried manner, to give his Majesty the outlines of the battle, mentioning, with great encomium, Capizucca and Aquila, Mondragon and Vasto, with many other officers, and recommending them for reward and promotion; praising, in short, heartily and earnestly, all who had contributed to the victory, except himself, to whose personal exertions it was chiefly due. "As for good old Mansfeld," said he, "he bore himself like the man he is, and he deserves that your Majesty should send him a particular mark of your royal approbation, writing to him yourself pleasantly in Spanish, which is that which will be most highly esteemed by him." [2] Alexander hinted also that Philip would do well to bestow upon Mansfeld the countship of Biart, as a reward for his long years of faithful service.[3]

This action on the Kowenstyn terminated the effective resistance of Antwerp. A few days before, the monster-vessel, in the construction of which so much time and money had been consumed, had at last been set afloat. She had been called the War's End, and, so far as Antwerp was concerned, the fates that presided over her birth seemed to have been paltering in a double sense when the ominous name was con-

[1] "Doy a V. M. muy muches vezes la enora buena y infinitas gracias a la Divina," &c. MS. letter before cited.

[2] "El buen viejo del conde de Mansfeld anduvo como quien es, y merece que V. M. se le mande en particular agradecer, escribiendolo en Espaflol regaladamente que es lo que mas estimaria," &c. (Ibid.)

[3] Ibid. The account of this remarkable action has been mainly gathered from the manuscript letters of Parma to Philip, written from the scene itself, of some Englishmen, also eye-witnesses, and from a careful comparison of contemporary historians. Vide Bor, II. 599, 600. Meteren, xii. 224. Hoofd Vervolgh, 97-99, *seq.* Bentivoglio, P. II. L. III. 297, *seq.*, whose brother, the Marchese Hippolito Bentivoglio, distinguished himself in the action, and was promoted, in consequence, to a company of lancers by Parma. Strada, II. 354-367. Baudartii, 'Polemographia,' II. 27-30. Le Petit, II. 514. Wagenaar, viii. 80. Van Wyn op Wagenaar, viii. 39, 40, et al.

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ferred. She was larger than anything previously known in naval architecture; she had four masts and three helms. Her bulwarks were ten feet thick; her tops were musket-proof. She had twenty guns of largest size, besides many other pieces of artillery of lesser calibre, the lower tier of which was almost at the water's level. She was to carry one thousand men, and she was so supported on corks and barrels as to be sure to float under any circumstances. Thus she was a great swimming fortress which could not be sunk, and was impervious to shot. Unluckily, however, in spite of her four masts and three helms, she would neither sail nor steer, and she proved but a great, unmanageable and very ridiculous tub, fully justifying all the sarcasms that had been launched upon her during the period of her construction, which had been almost as long as the siege itself.[1]

The Spaniards called her the Bugaboo—a monster to scare children withal.[2] The patriots christened her the Elephant, the Antwerp Folly, the Lost Penny, with many similar appellations.[3] A small army might have been maintained for a month, they said, on the money she had cost, or the whole city kept in bread for three months. At last, late in May, a few days before the battle of the Kowenstyn, she set forth from Antwerp, across the submerged land, upon her expedition to sweep all the Spanish forts out of existence, and to bring the war to its end. She came to her own end very briefly, for, after drifting helplessly about for an hour, she stuck fast in the sand in the neighbourhood of Ordam, while the crew and soldiers made their escape, and came back to the city to share in the ridicule which, from first to last, had attached itself to the monster-ship.[4]

Two days after the Kowenstyn affair, Alexander sent an expedition under Count Charles Mansfeld to take possession of the great Bugaboo. The boat, in which were Count

[1] Strada, II. 353. Le Petit, II. 512. Baudartii, 'Polemog.' II. 30, with an admirable engraving. Meteren, Bor, Hoofd, et al. *ubi sup.*

[2] "Caranjamaula." Strada, *ubi sup.*

[3] Baudartius, Le Petit, Strada, *ubi sup.*

[4] Ibid.

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Charles, Count Aremberg, his brother de Barbançon, and other noble volunteers, met with an accident: a keg of gunpowder accidentally exploding, blowing Aremberg into the water, whence he escaped unharmed by swimming, and frightfully damaging Mansfeld in the face.[1] This indirect mischief —the only injury ever inflicted by the War's End upon the enemy—did not prevent the rest of the party in the boats from taking possession of the ship, and bringing her in triumph to the Prince of Parma. After being thoroughly examined and heartily laughed at by the Spaniards, she was broken up—her cannon, munitions, and other valuable materials, being taken from her—and then there was an end of the War's End.[2]

This useless expenditure—against the judgment and entreaties of many leading personages—was but a type of the difficulties with which Sainte Aldegonde had been obliged to contend from the first day of the siege to the last. Every one in the city had felt himself called on to express an opinion as to the proper measures for defence. Diversity of humours, popular license, anarchy, did not constitute the best government for a city beleagured by Alexander Farnese. We have seen the deadly injury inflicted upon the cause at the outset by the brutality of the butchers, and the manful struggle which Sainte Aldegonde had maintained against their cupidity and that of their friends. He had dealt with the thousand difficulties which rose up around him from day to day, but his best intentions were perpetually misconstrued, his most strenuous exertions steadily foiled. It was a city where there was much love of money, and where commerce—always timid by nature, particularly when controlled by alien residents—was often the cause of almost abject cowardice.

From time to time there had been threatening demonstrations made against the burgomaster, who, by protracting the resistance of Antwerp, was bringing about the absolute destruction of a world-wide trade, and the downfall of the most opulent capital in Christendom. There were also many popu-

[1] Strada, II. 368. [2] Ibid.

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lar riots—very easily inflamed by the Catholic portion of the inhabitants—for bread. "Bread, bread, or peace!" was hoarsely shouted by ill-looking mischievous crowds, that dogged the steps and besieged the doors of Sainte Aldegonde; but the burgomaster had done his best by eloquence of tongue and personal courage, both against mobs and against the enemy, to inspire the mass of his fellow-citizens with his own generous spirit. He had relied for a long time on the negotiation with France, and it would be difficult to exaggerate the disastrous effects produced by the treachery of the Valois court. The historian Le Petit, a resident of Antwerp at the time of the siege, had been despatched on secret mission to Paris, and had communicated to the States' deputies Sainte Aldegonde's earnest adjurations that they should obtain, if possible, before it should be too late, an auxiliary force and a pecuniary subsidy. An immediate assistance, even if slight, might be sufficient to prevent Antwerp and its sister cities from falling into the hands of the enemy. On that messenger's return, the burgomaster, much encouraged by his report, had made many eloquent speeches in the senate, and for a long time sustained the sinking spirits of the citizens.[1]

The irritating termination to the triumph actually achieved against the bridge, and the tragical result to the great enterprise against the Kowenstyn, had now thoroughly broken the heart of Antwerp. For the last catastrophe Sainte Aldegonde himself was highly censurable, although the chief portion of the blame rested on the head of Hohenlo. Nevertheless the States of Holland were yet true to the cause of the Union and of liberty. Notwithstanding their heavy expenditures, and their own loss of men, they urged warmly and earnestly the continuance of the resistance, and promised, within at latest three months' time, to raise an army of twelve thousand foot and seven thousand horse, with which they pledged themselves to relieve the city, or to perish in the endeavour.[2] At the same time, the legation, which had been sent to England to offer the sovereignty to Queen Elizabeth, sent encouraging

[1] Le Petit, II. 505. [2] Meteren, xii. 225.

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despatches to Antwerp, assuring the authorities that arrangements for an auxiliary force had been effected; while Elizabeth herself wrote earnestly upon the subject with her own hand.[1]

"I am informed," said that Princess, "that through the closing of the Scheldt you are likely to enter into a treaty with the Prince of Parma, the issue of which is very much to be doubted, so far as the maintenance of your privileges is concerned. Remembering the warm friendship which has ever existed between this crown and the house of Burgundy, in the realms of which you are an important member, and considering that my subjects engaged in commerce have always met with more privilege and comity in the Netherlands than in any other country, I have resolved to send you at once, assistance, comfort, and aid. The details of the plan will be stated by your envoys; but be assured that by me you will never be forsaken or neglected."[2]

The negotiations with Queen Elizabeth—most important for the Netherlands, for England, and for the destinies of Europe—which succeeded the futile diplomatic transactions with France, will be laid before the reader in a subsequent chapter. It is proper that they should be massed by themselves, so that the eye can comprehend at a single glance their whole progress and aspect, as revealed both by public and official, and by secret and hitherto unpublished records. Meantime, so far as regards Antwerp, those negotiations had been too deliberately conducted for the hasty and impatient temper of the citizens.

The spirit of the commercial metropolis, long flagging, seemed at last broken. Despair was taking possession of all hearts. The common people did nothing but complain, the magistrates did nothing but wrangle. In the broad council the debates and dissensions were discouraging and endless. Six of the eight militia-colonels were for holding out at all hazards, while a majority of the eighty captains were for capitulation. The populace was tumultuous and threatening,

[1] Bor, II. 607-609.

[2] See the letter in Bor, II. 608.

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demanding peace and bread at any price. Holland sent promises in abundance, and Holland was sincere; but there had been much disappointment, and there was now infinite bitterness. It seemed obvious that a crisis was fast approaching, and—unless immediate aid should come from Holland or from England—that a surrender was inevitable.[1] La Noue, after five years' imprisonment, had at last been exchanged against Count Philip Egmont. That noble, chief of an ancient house, cousin of the Queen of France, was mortified at being ransomed against a simple Huguenot gentleman—even though that gentleman was the illustrious "iron-armed" La Noue—but he preferred to sacrifice his dignity for the sake of his liberty. He was still more annoyed that one hundred thousand crowns as security were exacted from La Noue—for which the King of Navarre became bondsman—that he would never again bear arms in the Netherlands except in obedience to the French monarch, while no such pledges were required of himself. La Noue visited the Prince of Parma at Antwerp, to take leave, and was received with the courtesy due to his high character and great distinction. Alexander took pleasure in showing him all his fortifications, and explaining to him the whole system of the siege, and La Noue was filled with honest amazement. He declared afterwards that the works were superb and impregnable, and that if he had been on the outside at the head of twelve thousand troops, he should have felt obliged to renounce the idea of relieving the city.[2] "Antwerp cannot escape you," confessed the veteran Huguenot, "but must soon fall into your hands. And when you enter, I would counsel you to hang up your sword at its gate, and let its capture be the crowning trophy in your list of victories."

"You are right," answered Parma, "and many of my friends have given me the same advice; but how am I to retire, engaged as I am for life in the service of my King?"[3]

[1] Le Petit, II. 518. Bor, II. 610-613, *seq.*

[2] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c. I. 77-80.

[3] Le Petit, II. 518.

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Such was the opinion of La Noue, a man whose love for the reformed religion and for civil liberty can be as little doubted as his competency to form an opinion upon great military subjects. As little could he be suspected—just coming as he did from an infamous prison, whence he had been at one time invited by Philip II. to emerge, on condition of allowing his eyes to be put out[1]—of any partiality for that monarch or his representative.

Moreover, although the States of Holland and the English government were earnestly desirous of relieving the city, and were encouraging the patriots with well-founded promises, the Zeeland authorities were lukewarm. The officers of the Zeeland navy, from which so much was expected, were at last discouraged. They drew up, signed, and delivered to Admiral Justinus de Nassau, a formal opinion to the effect that the Scheldt had now so many dry and dangerous places, and that the tranquil summer-nights—so different from those long, stormy ones of winter—were so short as to allow of no attempt by water likely to be successful to relieve the city.[2]

Here certainly was much to discourage, and Sainte Aldegonde was at length discouraged. He felt that the last hope of saving Antwerp was gone, and with it all possibility of maintaining the existence of a United Netherland commonwealth. The Walloon Provinces were lost already; Ghent, Brussels, Mechlin, had also capitulated, and, with the fall of Antwerp, Flanders and Brabant must fall. There would be no barrier left even to save Holland itself. Despair entered the heart of the burgomaster, and he listened too soon to its treacherous voice. Yet while he thought a free national state no longer a possibility, he imagined it practicable to secure religious liberty by negotiation with Philip II. He abandoned with a sigh one of the two great objects for which he had struggled side by side with Orange for twenty years, but he thought it possible to secure the other. His purpose was now to obtain a favourable capitulation for Antwerp, and at the same time

[1] Amtrault, 'Vie de La Noue,' 280, 281–298; 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' iii. p. 481, 482.

[2] Meteren, xii., 225vo.

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to bring about the submission of Holland, Zeeland, and the other United Provinces, to the King of Spain. Here certainly was a great change of face on the part of one so conspicuous, and hitherto so consistent, in the ranks of Netherland patriots, and it is therefore necessary, in order thoroughly to estimate both the man and the crisis, to follow carefully his steps through the secret path of negotiation into which he now entered, and in which the Antwerp drama was to find its conclusion. In these transactions, the chief actors are, on the one side, the Prince of Parma, as representative of absolutism and the Papacy; on the other, Sainte Aldegonde, who had passed his life as the champion of the Reformation.

No doubt the pressure upon the burgomaster was very great. Tumults were of daily occurrence. Crowds of rioters beset his door with cries of denunciations and demands for bread. A large and turbulent mob upon one occasion took possession of the horse-market, and treated him with personal indignity and violence, when he undertook to disperse them.[1] On the other hand, Parma had been holding out hopes of pardon with more reasonable conditions than could well be expected, and had, with a good deal of art, taken advantage of several trivial circumstances to inspire the burghers with confidence in his good-will. Thus, an infirm old lady in the city happened to imagine herself so dependent upon asses' milk as to have sent her purveyor out of the city, at the peril of his life, to procure a supply from the neighbourhood. The young man was captured, brought to Alexander, from whose hands he very naturally expected the punishment of a spy. The prince, however, presented him, not only with his liberty, but with a she-ass, and loaded the animal with partridges and capons, as a present for the invalid. The magistrates, hearing of the incident, and not choosing to be outdone in courtesy, sent back a waggon-load of old wine and remarkable confectionary as an offering to Alexander, and with this interchange of dainties led the way to the amenities of diplomacy.

[1] Bor, II. 605, 606. Hoofd, Vervolgh, 108 [2] Strada, II. 372.

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Sainte Aldegonde's position had become a painful one. The net had been drawn closely about the city. The bridge seemed impregnable, the great Kowenstyn was irrecoverably in the hands of the enemy, and now all the lesser forts in the immediate vicinity of Antwerp—Borght, Hoboken, Cantecroix, Stralen, Berghen, and the rest—had likewise fallen into his grasp. An account of grain, taken on the 1st of June, gave an average of a pound a-head for a month long, or half a pound for two months.[1] This was not the famine-point, according to the standard which had once been established in Leyden; but the courage of the burghers had been rapidly oozing away, under the pressure of their recent disappointments. It seemed obvious to the burgomaster, that the time for yielding had arrived.

"I had maintained the city,"[2] he said, "for a long period, without any excessive tumult or great effusion of blood—a city where there was such a multitude of inhabitants, mostly merchants or artisans deprived of all their traffic, stripped of their manufactures, destitute of all commodities and means of living. I had done this in the midst of a great diversity of humours and opinions, a vast popular license, a confused anarchy, among a great number of commanders, most of them inexperienced in war; with very little authority of my own, with slender forces of ships, soldiers, and sailors; with slight appearance of support from king or prince without, or of military garrison within; and under all these circumstances I exerted myself to do my uttermost duty in preserving the city, both in regard to its internal government, and by force of arms by land and sea, without sparing myself in any labour or peril.

"I know very well that there are many persons, who, finding themselves quite at their ease, and far away from the hard blows that are passing, are pleased to exhibit their

[1] Meteren, xii. 224, *seq.*

[2] Marnix de Ste. Aldegonde, 'Commentaire sur les Affaires d'Anvers,' 1585. Vide 'Notices Historique et Bibliographique sur Philippe de Marnix,' par Albert La Croix et François van Meenen, Bruxelles, 1858. 'Oeuvres de Philippe de Marnix, précédées d'une Introduction par Edgar Quinet.'

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wisdom by sitting in judgment upon others, founding their decision only upon the results. But I demand to be judged by equity and reason, when passion has been set aside. I claim that my honour shall be protected against my calumniators; for all should remember that I am not the first man, nor shall I be the last, that has been blamed unjustly. All persons employed in public affairs are subject to such hazards, but I submit myself to Him who knows all hearts, and who governs all. I take Him to witness that in the affair of Antwerp, as in all my other actions since my earliest youth, I have most sincerely sought His glory and the welfare of His poor people, without regard to my own private interests."[1]

For it is not alone the fate of Antwerp that is here to be recorded. The fame of Sainte Aldegonde was now seriously compromised. The character of a great man must always be closely scanned and scrutinised; protected, if needful, against calumny, but always unflinchingly held up to the light. Names illustrious by genius and virtue are History's most precious treasures, faithfully to be guarded by her, jealously to be watched; but it is always a misfortune when her eyes are deceived by a glitter which is not genuine.

Sainte Aldegonde was a man of unquestionable genius. His character had ever been beyond the reproach of self-seeking or ignoble ambition. He had multiplied himself into a thousand forms to serve the cause of the United Netherland States, and the services so rendered had been brilliant and frequent. A great change in his conduct and policy was now approaching, and it is therefore the more necessary to examine closely at this epoch his attitude and his character.

Early in June, Richardot, president of the council of Artois, addressed a letter to Sainte Aldegonde, by command of Alexander of Parma, suggesting a secret interview between the burgomaster and the Prince.

On the 8th of June, Sainte Aldegonde replied, in favourable terms, as to the interview; but observed, that, as he was an official personage, it was necessary for him to communicate

[1] Works just cited.

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the project to the magistracy of the city. He expressed likewise the hope that Parma would embrace the present opportunity for making a general treaty with all the Provinces. A special accord with Antwerp, leaving out Holland and Zeeland, would, he said, lead to the utter desolation of that city, and to the destruction of its commerce and manufactures, while the occasion now presented itself to the Prince of "winning praise and immortal glory by bringing back all the country to a voluntary and prompt obedience to his Majesty." He proposed, that, instead of his coming alone, there should be a number of deputies sent from Antwerp to confer with Alexander.[1]

On the 11th June, Richardot replied by expressing his own regrets and those of the Prince, that the interview could not have been with the burgomaster alone, but acknowledging the weight of his reasons, and acquiescing in the proposition to send a larger deputation. Three days afterwards, Sainte Aldegonde, on private consultation with some confidential personages, changed his ground; announced his preference for a private interview, under four eyes, with Parma; and requested that a passport might be sent. The passport was accordingly forwarded the same day, with an expression of Alexander's gratification, and with the offer, on the part of Richardot, to come himself to Antwerp as hostage during the absence of the burgomaster in Parma's camp at Beveren.[2]

Sainte Aldegonde was accordingly about to start on the following day (16th of June), but meantime the affair had got wind. A secret interview, thus projected, was 16th June, 1585. regarded by the citizens as extremely suspicious. There was much bitter insinuation against the burgomaster —many violent demonstrations. "Aldegonde, they say, is going to see Parma," said one of the burghers, "which gives much dissatisfaction, because, 'tis feared that he will make a treaty according to the appetite and pleasure of his High-

[1] 'Correspondance de Richardot avec Marnix de Ste. Aldegonde.' Archivo de Simancas MS.

[2] Richardot to Marnix, 11 June, 1585, MS.

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ness, having been gained over to the royal cause by money. He says that it would be a misfortune to send a large number of burghers. Last Sunday (16th June) there was a meeting of the broad council. The preachers came into the assembly, and so animated the citizens by demonstrations of their religion, that all rushed from the council-house, crying with loud voices that they did not desire peace but war."[1]

This desire was a healthy and a reasonable one; but, unfortunately, the Antwerpers had not always been so vigorous or so united in their resistance to Parma. At present, however, they were very furious, so soon as the secret purpose of Sainte Aldegonde became generally known. The proposed capitulation, which great mobs had been for weeks long savagely demanding at the hands of the burgomaster, was now ascribed to the burgomaster's unblushing corruption. He had obviously, they thought, been purchased by Spanish ducats to do what he had hitherto been so steadily refusing. A certain Van Werne had gone from Antwerp into Holland a few days before upon his own private affairs, with a safe-conduct from Parma. Sainte Aldegonde had not communicated to him the project then on foot, but he had permitted him to seek a secret interview with Count Mansfeld. If that were granted, Van Werne was to hint that in case the Provinces could promise themselves a religious peace it would be possible, in the opinion of Sainte Aldegonde, to induce Holland and Zeeland and all the rest of the United Provinces, to return to their obedience. Van Werne, on his return to Antwerp, divulged these secret negotiations, and so put a stop to Sainte Aldegonde's scheme of going alone to Parma. "This has given a bad suspicion to the people," wrote the burgomaster to Richardot, "so much so that I fear

[1] "Aldegonde dit qu'il veult aller, ce que plusieurs des bourgeois ne veuillent, à cause qu'ils craindent qu'il feroit l'accord selon l'appetit et volonté de son Alteze, estant gaigné par force d'argent. Disant etre malheur qu'il y aillent douze bourgeois. —Les predicans ont entré au conseil le dimanche passé, et ont tellement animés les bourgeois par démontrances de leur religion, que les bourgeois, sortant du conseil, crioient a haulte voix qu'ils ne desiroient paix mais bien la guerre." MS. letter, without date or signature, in the 'Archives Royales de Belgique,' 1585.

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to have trouble. The broad council has been in session, but I don't know what has taken place there, and I do not dare to ask."[1]

Sainte Aldegonde's motive, as avowed by himself, for seeking a private interview, was because he had received no answer to the main point in his first letter, as to the proposition for a general accord. In order therefore to make the deliberations more rapid, he had been disposed to discuss that preliminary question in secret. "But now," said he to Richardot, "as the affair had been too much divulged, as well by diverse reports and writings sown about, very inopportunely, as by the arrival of M. Van Werne, I have not found it practicable to set out upon my road, without communication with the members of the government. This has been done, however, not in the way of consultation, but as the announcement of a thing already resolved upon."[2]

He proceeded to state, that great difficulties had arisen, exactly as he had foreseen. The magistrates would not hear of a general accord, and it was therefore necessary that a delay should be interposed before it would be possible for him to come. He begged Richardot to persuade Alexander, that he was not trifling with him. "It is not," said he, "from lightness, or any other passion, that I am retarding this affair. I will do all in my power to obtain leave to make a journey to the camp of his Highness, at whatever price it may cost, and I hope before long to arrive at my object. If I fail, it must be ascribed to the humours of the people; for my anxiety to restore all the Provinces to obedience to his Majesty is extreme."[3]

Richardot, in reply, the next day, expressed regret, without

[1] Marnix to Richardot, 16 June, 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS. "De ce que s'y est passé, je l'ignore, sans l'oser demander," &c.

[2] "Mais comme l'affaire a este par trop divulguee, tant par divers rapports et ecrits semés mal à propos, comme par la venue de Sr Van Werne, je n'ay trouvé faisable de me mettre en chemin, sans le communiquer aux membres, non pas toutefois en forme de deliberation, mais comme une chose que nous avions resolue." Marnix to Richardot, MS., *ubi sup.*

[3] Ibid.

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astonishment, on the part of Alexander and himself, at the intelligence thus received. People had such difference of humour, he said, and all men were not equally capable of reason. Nevertheless the citizens were warned not to misconstrue Parma's gentleness, because he was determined to die, with his whole army, rather than not take Antwerp. "As for the King," said Richardot, "he will lay down all his crowns sooner than abandon this enterprise."[1] Van Werne was represented as free from blame, and sincerely desirous of peace. Richardot had only stated to him, in general terms, that letters had been received from Sainte Aldegonde, expressing an opinion in favour of peace. As for the royalists, they were quite innocent of the reports and writings that had so inopportunely been circulated in the city. It was desirable, however, that the negotiation should not too long be deferred, for otherwise Antwerp might perish, before a general accord with Holland and Zeeland could be made. He begged Sainte Aldegonde to banish all anxiety as to Parma's sentiments towards himself or the community. "Put yourself, Sir, quite at your ease," said he. "His Highness is in no respects dissatisfied with you, nor prone to conceive any indignation against this poor people."[2] He assured the burgomaster that he was not suspected of lightness, nor of a wish to delay matters, but he expressed solicitude with regard to the threatening demonstrations which had been made against him in Antwerp. "For," said he, "popular governments are full of a thousand hazards, and it would be infinitely painful to me, if you should come to harm."[3]

17th June, 1585.

Thus it would appear that it was Sainte Aldegonde who was chiefly anxious to effect the reconciliation of Holland and Zeeland with the King. The initiative of this project to

[1] Richardot to Marnix, 17 June, 1585, MS. "Mettra toutes ses couronnes plutot qu'abandonner cette entreprise," &c.

[2] "Bref, Monsieur, mettez vous a repos. Car son Altesse n'est en rien mal satisfaite de vous, ni facile a concevoir quelque indignation contre ce pauvre peuple." MS. *ubi sup.*

[3] "Car les gouvernemens populaires sont plains de mil hazards, et il me desplairait infiniment que vous eussiez mal." (Ibid.)

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include all the United Provinces in one scheme with the reduction of Antwerp came originally from him, and was opposed, at the outset, by the magistrates of that city, by the Prince of Parma and his councillors, and by the States of Holland and Zeeland. The demonstrations on the part of the preachers, the municipal authorities, and the burghers, against Sainte Aldegonde and his plan for a secret interview, so soon as it was divulged, made it impossible to carry that project into effect.

"Aldegonde, who governs Antwerp," wrote Parma to Philip, "was endeavouring, eight days ago, to bring about some kind of negociation for an accord. He manifested a desire to come hither for the sake of a personal interview with me, which I permitted. It was to have taken place last Sunday, 16th of this month, but by reason of a certain popular tumult, which arose out of these circumstances, it has been necessary to defer the meeting."[1]

There was much disappointment felt by the royalist at this unsatisfactory result. "These bravadoes and impertinent demonstrations on the part of some of your people," wrote Richardot, ten days later, "will be the destruction of the whole country, and will convert the Prince's gentleness into anger. 'Tis these good and zealous patriots, trusting to a little favourable breeze that blew for a few days past, who have been the cause of all this disturbance, and who are ruining their miserable country—miserable, I say, for having produced such abortions as themselves."[2]

Notwithstanding what had passed, however, Richardot intimated that Alexander was still ready to negociate. "And if you, Sir," he concluded, in his letter to Aldegonde, "concerning whom many of our friends have at present a sinister

[1] "De ocho dias ha procurado Aldegonda, qui goberna Anveres, travar alguna platica de acuerdo con aquella villa, mostrando desseo de querer venir el mismo a verse conmigo, loquel le permité. Havia de haverlo hecho este ultimo domingo 16 del presente, pero con la escusa de cierto tumulto popular, que sobre el caso havia sucedido la ha tenido para differirlo." Parma to Philip II., 20 June, 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

[2] Richardot to Marnix, 30 June, 1585. "Ce sont ces bons et zeleux patriotes qui ruynent leur miserable patrie, miserable, dis je, d'avoir produit tels avoltons." Arch. de Sim. MS.

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opinion,—as if your object was to circumvent us,—are willing to proceed roundly and frankly, as I myself firmly believe that you will do, we may yet hope for a favourable issue."[1]

Thus the burgomaster was already the object of suspicion to both parties. The Antwerpers denounced him as having been purchased by Spanish gold; the royalists accused him of intending to overreach the King. It was not probable therefore that all were correct in their conjectures.

At last it was arranged that deputies should be appointed by the broad council to commence a negociation with Parma. Sainte Aldegonde informed Richardot, that he would accompany them, if his affairs should permit. He protested his sincerity and frankness throughout the whole affair. "They try to calumniate me," he said, "as much on one side as on the other, but I will overcome by my innocence all the malice of my slanderers. If his Highness should be pleased to grant us some liberty for our religion, I dare to promise such faithful service as will give very great satisfaction."[2] 5th July, 1585.

Four days later, Sainte Aldegonde himself, together with M. de Duffel, M. de Schoonhoven, and Adrian Hesselt, came to Parma's camp at Beveren, as deputies on the part of the Antwerp authorities. They were courteously received by the Prince, and remained three days as his guests. During the period of this visit, the terms of a capitulation were thoroughly discussed, between Alexander and his councillors upon one part, and the four deputies on the other. The envoys endeavoured, with all the arguments at their command, to obtain the consent of the Prince to three preliminary points which they laid down as indispensable. Religious liberty must be granted, the citadel must not be reconstructed, a foreign garrison must not be admitted; they said. As it was the firm intention of the King, however, not to make the slightest concession on any one of these points, the discussion was not a very profitable one. Besides the public interviews at which all

[1] Richardot to Marnix, 30 June, 1585.
[2] Marnix to Richardot, 5 July, 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

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the negociators were present, there was a private conference between Parma and Sainte Aldegonde which lasted more than four hours, in which each did his best to enforce his opinions upon the other. The burgomaster endeavoured to persuade the Prince with all the eloquence for which he was so renowned, that the hearts not of the Antwerpers only, but of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, were easily to be won at that moment. Give them religious liberty, and attempt to govern them by gentleness rather than by Spanish garrisons, and the road was plain to a complete reconciliation of all the Provinces with his Majesty.

Alexander, who knew his master to be inexorable upon these three points, was courteous but peremptory in his statements. He recommended that the rebels should take into consideration their own declining strength, the inexhaustible resources of the King, the impossibility of obtaining succour from France, and the perplexing dilatoriness of England, rather than waste their time in idle expectations of a change in the Spanish policy. He also intimated, obliquely but very plainly, to Sainte Aldegonde, that his own fortune would be made, and that he had everything to hope from his Majesty's bounty, if he were now willing to make himself useful in carrying into effect the royal plans.[1]

The Prince urged these views with so much eloquence, that he seemed, in his own words, to have been directly inspired by the Lord for this special occasion.[2] Sainte Aldegonde, too, was signally impressed by Alexander's language, and thoroughly fascinated—magnetized, as it were—by his character. He subsequently declared, that he had often conversed familiarly with many eloquent personages, but that he had never known a man more powerful or persuasive than the Prince of Parma.[3] He could honestly say of him—as Hasdrubal had said of Scipio—that Farnese was even more admirable when seen face to face, than he had seemed when one only heard of his glorious achievements.[4]

[1] Strada, II. 379. Comp. Bor, II. 606. Hoofd Vervolgh, 109.
[2] Strada, *ubi sup.* [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

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"The burgomaster and three deputies," wrote Parma to Philip, "were here until the 12th July. We discussed the points and form of a capitulation, and they have gone back thoroughly satisfied. Sainte Aldegonde especially was much pleased with the long interview which he had with me, alone, and which lasted more than three hours. I told him, as well as my weakness and suffering from the tertian fever permitted, all that God inspired me to say on our behalf."[1]

30th July, 1585.

Nevertheless, if Sainte Aldegonde and his colleagues went away thoroughly satisfied, they had reason, soon after their return, to become thoroughly dejected. The magistrates and burghers would not listen to a proposition to abandon the three points, however strongly urged to do so by arguments drawn from the necessity of the situation, and by representations of Parma's benignity. As for the burgomaster, he became the target for calumny, so soon as his three hours' private interview became known; and the citizens loudly declared that his head ought to be cut off, and sent in a bag, as a present, to Philip, in order that the traitor might meet the sovereign with whom he sought a reconciliation, face to face, as soon as possible.[2]

The deputies, immediately after their return, made their report to the magistrates, as likewise to the colonels and captains, and to the deans of guilds. Next day, although it was Sunday, there was a session of the broad council, and Sainte Aldegonde made a long address, in which—as he stated in a letter to Richardot—he related everything that had passed in his private conversation with Alexander. An answer was promised to Parma on the following Tuesday, but the burgomaster spoke very discouragingly as to the probability of an accord.

15th July, 1585.

[1] "Se dieron los puntos y forma del acuerdo, con que tomaron a yr muy satisfechos, y el Aldeg^de en particular de la larga platica que a solas con el mas de 3 horas tuve, diziendole lo que Dios me inspiro a n^ro proposito, y mejor me permitió la flaqueza y trauajo de la terciana." Parma to Philip II., 30 July, 1585, Arch. de Sim. MS.

[2] Bor, II. 606. Hoofd Vervolgh, 109.

[3] Marnix to Richardot, 15 July, 1585, MS.

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"The joy with which our return was greeted," he said, "was followed by a general disappointment and sadness, so soon as the result was known. The want of a religious toleration, as well as the refusal to concede on the other two points, has not a little altered the hearts of all, *even of the Catholics*. A citadel and a garrison are considered ruin and desolation to a great commercial city. I have done what I can to urge the acceptance of such conditions as the Prince is willing to give, and have spoken in general terms of his benign intentions. The citizens still desire peace. Had his Highness been willing to take both religions under his protection, he might have won all hearts, and very soon all the other Provinces would have returned to their obedience, while the clemency and magnanimity of his Majesty would thus have been rendered admirable throughout the world."[1]

The power to form an accurate conception as to the nature of Philip and of other personages with whom he was dealing, and as to the general signs of his times, seems to have been wanting in the character of the gifted Aldegonde. He had been dazzled by the personal presence of Parma, and he now spoke of Philip II., as if his tyranny over the Netherlands—which for twenty years had been one horrible and uniform whole—were the accidental result of circumstances, not the necessary expression of his individual character, and might be easily changed at will—as if Nero, at a moment's warning, might transform himself into Trajan. It is true that the innermost soul of the Spanish king could by no possibility be displayed to any contemporary, as it reveals itself, after three centuries, to those who study the record of his most secret thoughts; but, at any rate, it would seem that his career had been sufficiently consistent, to manifest the amount of "clemency and magnanimity" which he might be expected to exercise.

"Had his Majesty," wrote Sainte Aldegonde, "been willing, since the year sixty-six, to pursue a course of toleration, the

[1] Marnix to Richardot, just cited.

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15th July, 1585. memory of his reign would have been sacred to all posterity, with an immortal praise of sapience, benignity, and sovereign felicity."[1]

This might be true, but nevertheless a tolerating Philip, in the year 1585, ought to have seemed to Sainte Aldegonde an impossible idea.

"The emperors," continued the burgomaster, "who immediately succeeded Tiberius were the cause of the wisdom which displayed itself in the good Trajan—also a Spaniard—and in Antoninus, Verus, and the rest.[2] If you think that this city, by the banishment of a certain number of persons, will be content to abandon the profession of the reformed faith, you are much mistaken. You will see, with time, that the exile of this religion will be accompanied by a depopulation and a sorrowful ruin and desolation of this flourishing city. But this will be as it pleases God. Meantime I shall not fail to make all possible exertions to induce the citizens to consent to a reconciliation with his Majesty. The broad council will soon give their answer, and then we shall send a deputation. We shall invite Holland and Zeeland to join with us, but there is little hope of their consent."[3]

Certainly there was little hope of their consent. Sainte Aldegonde was now occupied in bringing about the capitulation of Antwerp, without any provision for religious liberty—a concession which Parma had most distinctly refused—and it was not probable that Holland and Zeeland, after twenty years of hard fighting, and with an immediate prospect of assistance from England—could now be induced to resign the great object of the contest without further struggle.

It was not until a month had elapsed that the authorities of Antwerp sent their propositions to the Prince of Parma.

12th Aug., 1585. On the 12th August, however, Sainte Aldegonde, accompanied by the same three gentlemen who had been employed on the first mission, and by seventeen others

[1] Marnix to Richardot, just cited.

[2] "Les premiers empereurs apres Tybere rendirent sages et advisez premierement le bon Trajan, aussi Espagnol, et puis Antonin, Verus," &c. (Ibid.)

[3] Ibid.

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besides, proceeded with safe-conduct to the camp at Beveren. Here they were received with great urbanity, and hospitably entertained by Alexander, who received their formal draft of articles for a capitulation, and referred it to be reported upon to Richardot, Pamel, and Vanden Burgh. Meantime there were many long speeches and several conferences, sometimes between all the twenty-one envoys and the Prince together; on other occasions, more secret ones, at which only Aldegonde and one or two of his colleagues were present. It had been obvious, from the date of the first interview, in the preceding month, that the negociation would be of no avail until the government of Antwerp was prepared to abandon all the conditions which they had originally announced as indispensable. Alexander had not much disposition and no authority whatever to make concessions.

"So far as I can understand," Parma had written on the 30th July, "they are very far from a conclusion. They have most exorbitant ideas, talking of some kind of liberty of conscience, besides refusing on any account to accept of garrisons, and having many reasons to allege on such subjects." [1]

The discussions, therefore, after the deputies had at last arrived, though courteously conducted, could scarcely be satisfactory to both parties. "The articles were thoroughly deliberated upon," wrote Alexander, "by all the deputies, nor did I fail to have private conferences with Aldegonde, that most skilful and practised lawyer and politician," [2] as well as with two or three of the others. I did all in my power to bring them to a thorough recognition of their errors, and to produce a confidence in his Majesty's clemency, in order that they might concede what was needful for the interests of the Catholic religion and the security of the city. They heard all I had to say without exasperating themselves, and without interposing any strong objections, except in the matter of

[1] "Hasta agora bien lejos de concluyr, segun las exhorvitancias que presentan de querer alguna forma de libertad de consciencia, y en ninguna manera, guarnicion, alegando muchas cosas in su favor." MS. letter, 30 July, 1585.

[2] "Tan platico letrado y politico." Parma to Philip II., 25 Aug. 1585, MS.

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religion, and, still more, in the matter of the citadel and the garrison. Aldegonde took much pains to persuade me that it would be ruinous for a great, opulent, commercial city to submit to a foreign military force. Even if compelled by necessity to submit now, the inhabitants would soon be compelled by the same necessity to abandon the place entirely, and to leave in ruins one of the most splendid and powerful cities in the world, and in this opinion Catholics and heretics unanimously concurred. The deputies protested, with one accord, that so pernicious and abominable a thing as a citadel and garrison could not even be proposed to their constituents. I answered, that, so long as the rebellion of Holland and Zeeland lasted, it would be necessary for your Majesty to make sure of Antwerp, by one or the other of those means, but promised that the city should be relieved of the incumbrance so soon as those islands should be reduced.

"Sainte Aldegonde was not discouraged by this statement, but in the hope of convincing others, or with the wish of showing that he had tried his best, desired that I would hear him before the council of state. I granted the request, and Sainte Aldegonde then made another long and very elegant oration, intended to divert me from my resolution."[1]

It must be confessed—if the reports, which have come down to us of that long and elegant oration be correct—that the enthusiasm of the burgomaster for Alexander was rapidly degenerating into idolatry.

"We are not here, O invincible Prince," he said, "that we may excuse, by an anxious legation, the long defence which we have made of our homes. Who could have feared any danger to the most powerful city in the Netherlands from so moderate a besieging force? You would yourself have rather wished for, than approved of, a greater facility on our part, for the brave cannot love the timid. We knew the number of your troops, we had discovered the famine in your camp, we were aware of the paucity of your ships, we had

[1] 'Otra larga y muy elegante oracion directiva a desviar me de mi propuesto," &c. Parma to Philip II., MS. just cited.

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heard of the quarrels in your army, we were expecting daily to hear of a general mutiny among your soldiers. Were we to believe that with ten or eleven thousand men you would be able to block up the city by land and water, to reduce the open country of Brabant, to cut off all aid as well from the neighbouring towns as from the powerful provinces of Holland and Zeeland, to oppose, without a navy, the whole strength of our fleets, directed against the dyke? Truly, if you had been at the head of fifty thousand soldiers, and every soldier had possessed one hundred hands, it would have seemed impossible for you to meet so many emergencies in so many places, and under so many distractions. What you have done we now believe possible to do, only because we see that it has been done. You have subjugated the Scheldt, and forced it to bear its bridge, notwithstanding the strength of its current, the fury of the ocean-tides, the tremendous power of the ice-bergs, the perpetual conflicts with our fleets. We destroyed your bridge, with great slaughter of your troops. Rendered more courageous by that slaughter, you restored that mighty work. We assaulted the great dyke, pierced it through and through, and opened a path for our ships. You drove us off when victors, repaired the ruined bulwark, and again closed to us the avenue of relief. What machine was there that we did not employ? what miracles of fire did we not invent? what fleets and floating cidadels did we not put in motion? All that genius, audacity, and art, could teach us we have executed, calling to our assistance water, earth, heaven, and hell itself. Yet with all these efforts, with all this enginry, we have not only failed to drive you from our walls, but we have seen you gaining victories over other cities at the same time. You have done a thing, O Prince, than which there is nothing greater either in ancient or modern story. It has often occurred, while a general was besieging one city that he lost another situate farther off. But you, while besieging Antwerp, have reduced simultaneously Dendermonde, Ghent, Nymegen, Brussels, and Mechlin."[1]

[1] The oration is reported by Strada II., 374-376, who had access to more of Farnese's papers than will probably ever be in the possession of any other

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All this, and much more, with florid rhetoric, the burgomaster pronounced in honour of Farnese, and the eulogy was entirely deserved. It was hardly becoming, however, for such lips, at such a moment, to sound the praise of him whose victory had just decided the downfall of religious liberty, and of the national independence of the Netherlands. His colleagues certainly must have winced, as they listened to commendations so lavishly bestowed upon the representative of Philip, and it is not surprising that Sainte Aldegonde's growing unpopularity should, from that hour, have rapidly increased. To abandon the whole object of the siege, when resistance seemed hopeless, was perhaps pardonable, but to offer such lip-homage to the conqueror was surely transgressing the bounds of decorum.

His conclusion, too, might to Alexander seem as insolent as the whole tenor of his address had been humble; for, after pronouncing this solemn eulogy upon the conqueror, he calmly proposed that the prize of the contest should be transferred to the conquered.

"So long as liberty of religion, and immunity from citadel and garrison can be relied upon," he said, "so long will Antwerp remain the most splendid and flourishing city in Christendom; but desolation will ensue if the contrary policy is to prevail."[1]

But it was very certain that liberty of religion, as well as immunity from citadel and garrison, were quite out of the question. Philip and Parma had long been inexorably resolved upon all the three points.

"After the burgomaster had finished his oration," wrote Alexander to his sovereign, "I discussed the matter with him in private, very distinctly and minutely."[2]

writer. It is possible that the harangue is indebted for some of its declamatory exuberance to the imagination of the historian; but I have found the Jesuit, in general, very accurate in transcribing and translating the diplomatic documents relating to his hero. A circumstantial account of this particular interview between the Prince and Marnix, with a full report of this oration by the latter, is not among the Simancas MSS.; and I have therefore relied upon Strada.

[1] Ibid.

[2] MS. Letter of 25 Aug. 1585, before cited.

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The religious point was soon given up, Sainte Aldegonde finding it waste of breath to say anything more about freedom of conscience. A suggestion was however made on the subject of the garrison, which the prince accepted, because it contained a condition which it would be easy to evade.

"Aldegonde proposed," said Parma, "that a garrison might be admissible if I made my entrance into the city merely with infantry and cavalry of nations which were acceptable—Walloons, namely, and Germans—and in no greater numbers than sufficient for a body-guard. I accepted, because, in substance, this would amount to a garrison, and because, also, after the magistrates shall have been changed, I shall have no difficulty in making myself master of the people, continuing the garrison, and rebuilding the citadel."[1]

The Prince proceeded to give his reasons why he was willing to accept the capitulation on what he considered so favourable terms to the besieged. Autumn was approaching. Already the fury of the storms had driven vessels clean over the dykes; the rebels in Holland and Zeeland were preparing their fleets—augmented by many new ships of war and fire-machines—for another desperate attack upon the Palisades, in which there was great possibility of their succeeding; an auxiliary force from England was soon expected; so that, in view of all these circumstances, he had resolved to throw himself at his Majesty's feet and implore his clemency. "If this people of Antwerp, as the head, is gained," said he, "there will be tranquillity in all the members."[2]

These reasons were certainly conclusive; nor is it easy to believe, that, under the circumstances thus succinctly stated by Alexander, it would have been impossible for the patriots to hold out until the promised succour from Holland and from England should arrive. In point of fact, the bridge could not have stood the winter which actually ensued; for it was the repeatedly expressed opinion of the Spanish officers in

[1] MS. Letter of 25 Aug. 1585, before cited.

[2] "Y pues de la que se usasse con esto pueblo, como cabeza, ha de resultar bien y tranquilidad a los miembros que restan," &c. (Ibid.)

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Antwerp, that the icebergs which then filled the Scheldt must inevitably have shattered twenty bridges to fragments, had there been so many.[1] It certainly was superfluous for the Prince to make excuses to Philip for accepting the proposed capitulation. All the prizes of victory had been thoroughly secured, unless pillage, massacre, and rape, which had been the regular accompaniments of Alva's victories, were to be reckoned among the indispensable trophies of a Spanish triumph.

Nevertheless, the dearth in the city had been well concealed from the enemy; for, three days after the surrender, not a loaf of bread was to be had for any money in all Antwerp, and Alexander declared that he would never have granted such easy conditions had he been aware of the real condition of affairs.[2]

The articles of capitulation agreed upon between Parma and the deputies were brought before the broad council on the 9th August. There was much opposition to them, as many magistrates and other influential personages entertained sanguine expectations from the English negotiation, and were beginning to rely with confidence upon the promises of Queen Elizabeth. The debate was waxing warm, when some of the councillors, looking out of window of the great hall, perceived that a violent mob had collected in the streets.[3] Furious cries for bread were uttered, and some meagre-looking individuals were thrust forward to indicate the famine which was prevailing, and the necessity of concluding the treaty without further delay. Thus the municipal government was perpetually exposed to democratic violence, excited by diametrically opposite influences. Sometimes the burgomaster was denounced for having sold himself and his country to the Spaniards, and was assailed with execrations for being willing to conclude a sudden and disgraceful peace.[4] At other moments he was accused of forging letters containing promises of succour from the Queen of England and from the authori-

[1] Le Petit, II. 502. [2] Meteren, XII. 225. [3] Le Petit, II. 518.
[4] Bor, II. 609.

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ties of Holland, in order to protract the lingering tortures of the war.[1] Upon this occasion the peace-mob carried its point. The councillors, looking out of window, rushed into the hall with direful accounts of the popular ferocity; the magistrates and colonels who had been warmest in opposition suddenly changed their tone, and the whole body of the broad council accepted the articles of capitulation by a unanimous vote.[2]

The window was instantly thrown open, and the decision publicly announced. The populace, wild with delight, rushed through the streets, tearing down the arms of the Duke of Anjou, which had remained above the public edifices since the period of that personage's temporary residence in the Netherlands, and substituting, with wonderful celerity, the escutcheon of Philip the Second.[3] Thus suddenly could an Antwerp mob pass from democratic insolence to intense loyalty.

The articles, on the whole, were as liberal as could have been expected. The only hope for Antwerp and for a great commonwealth of all the Netherlands was in holding out, even to the last gasp, until England and Holland, now united, had time to relieve the city. This was, unquestionably, possible. Had Antwerp possessed the spirit of Leyden, had William of Orange been alive, that Spanish escutcheon, now raised with such indecent haste, might have never been seen again on the outside wall of any Netherland edifice. Belgium would have become at once a constituent portion of a great independent national realm, instead of languishing until our own century, the dependency of a distant and a foreign metropolis. Nevertheless, as the Antwerpers were not disposed to make themselves martyrs, it was something that they escaped the nameless horrors which had often alighted upon cities subjected to an enraged soldiery. It redounds to the eternal honour of Alexander Farnese—when the fate of Naarden and Haarlem and Maestricht, in the days of Alva, and of Antwerp itself in the horrible "Spanish fury," is remembered—that there were no scenes of violence and outrage

[1] Bentivoglio, P. II. L. III. 292. [2] Le Petit, *ubi sup.* [3] Ibid.

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in the populous and wealthy city, which was at length at his mercy after having defied him so long.

Civil and religious liberty were trampled in the dust, commerce and manufactures were destroyed, the most valuable portion of the citizens sent into hopeless exile, but the remaining inhabitants were not butchered in cold blood.

The treaty was signed on the 17th August. Antwerp was to return to its obedience. There was to be an entire amnesty and oblivion for the past, without a single exception. Royalist absentees were to be reinstated in their possessions. Monasteries, churches, and the King's domains were to be restored to their former proprietors. The inhabitants of the city were to practise nothing but the Catholic religion. Those who refused to conform were allowed to remain two years for the purpose of winding up their affairs and selling out their property, provided that during that period they lived "without scandal towards the ancient religion"—a very vague and unsatisfactory condition. All prisoners were to be released excepting Teligny. Four hundred thousand florins were to be paid by the authorities as a fine. The patriot garrison was to leave the city with arms and baggage and all the honours of war.[1]

This capitulation gave more satisfaction to the hungry portion of the Antwerpers than to the patriot party of the Netherlands. Sainte Aldegonde was vehemently and unsparingly denounced as a venal traitor. It is certain, whatever his motives, that his attitude had completely changed. For it was not Antwerp alone that he had reconciled or was endeavouring to reconcile with the King of Spain, but Holland and Zeeland as well, and all the other independent Provinces. The ancient champion of the patriot army, the earliest signer of the 'Compromise,' the bosom friend of William the Silent, the author of the 'Wilhelmus' national song, now avowed his conviction, in a published defence of his conduct against the

[1] Bor, II. 610-613. Hoofd Vervolgh, 111-116. Strada, II. 378-383. Compare, for the history of the siege, which he calls "the most memorable in the world," Herrera, 'Hist. Gen. del Mundo,' P. II., L. xiv., Cap. 13-16, and L. XV., C. 1-4 ss. 28, 29. See also De Thou, IX., L. 80, and 81. Bentivoglio, P. II. L. III.; and the authorities previously cited.

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calumnious attacks upon it, "that it was impossible, with a clear conscience, for subjects, under any circumstances, to take up arms against Philip, their king."[1] Certainly if he had always entertained that opinion he must have suffered many pangs of remorse during his twenty years of active and illustrious rebellion. He now made himself secretly active in promoting the schemes of Parma and in counteracting the negotiation with England. He flattered himself, with an infatuation which it is difficult to comprehend, that it would be possible to obtain religious liberty for the revolting Provinces, although he had consented to its sacrifice in Antwerp. It is true that he had not the privilege of reading Philip's secret letters to Parma, but what was there in the character of the King — what intimation had ever been given by the Governor-General—to induce a belief in even the possibility of such a concession?

Whatever Sainte Aldegonde's opinions, it is certain that Philip had no intention of changing his own policy. He at first suspected the burgomaster of a wish to protract the negotiations for a perfidious purpose.

"Necessity has forced Antwerp," he wrote on the 17th of August—the very day on which the capitulation was actually signed—"to enter into negotiation. I understand the artifice of Aldegonde in seeking to prolong and make difficult the whole affair, under pretext of treating for the reduction of Holland and Zeeland at the same time. It was therefore very adroit in you to defeat this joint scheme at once, and urge the Antwerp matter by itself, at the same time not shutting the door on the others. With the prudence and dexterity with which this business has thus far been managed I am thoroughly satisfied."[2]

[1] Strada, II. 379.

[2] "Bien se vé que necessidad ha forzado Amberes a las platicas de concierto que andán, y el artificio de Aldegonde en haber tentado dilatar el negocio, so color de tratar la reducion de Holanda y Zelanda juntamente, y asi fué muy acertado desbaratarle este intento, y apretarle en lo que de Amberes, de casi no cerrando la puerta a lo demas, y de la cordura y destreza con que todo esto se ha guiado, quedo muy enterado y satisfecho." Philip II. to Parma, 17 Aug. 1585, Arch. de Sim. MS.

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The King also expressed his gratification at hearing from Parma that the demand for religious liberty in the Netherlands would soon be abandoned.

"In spite of the vehemence," he said, "which they manifest in the religious matter, desiring some kind of liberty, they will in the end, as you say they will, content themselves with what the other cities, which have returned to obedience, have obtained. *This must be done in all cases* without flinching, and without permitting any modification."[1]

What "had been obtained" by Brussels, Mechlin, Ghent, was well known. The heretics had obtained the choice of renouncing their religion or of going into perpetual exile, and this was to be the case "without flinching" in Holland and Zeeland, if those provinces chose to return to obedience. Yet Sainte Aldegonde deluded himself with the thought of a religious peace.

In another and very important letter of the same date Philip laid down his policy very distinctly. The Prince of Parma, by no means such a bigot as his master, had hinted at the possibility of tolerating the reformed religion in the places recovered from the rebels, *sub silentio*, for a period not defined, and long enough for the heretics to awake from their errors.

"You have got an expression of opinion, I see," wrote the King to Alexander, "of some grave men of wisdom and conscience, that the limitation of time, during which the heretics may live without scandal, may be left undefined; but I feel very keenly the danger of such a proposition. With regard to Holland and Zeeland, or any other provinces or towns, the first step must be for them to receive and maintain *alone* the exercise of the Catholic religion, and to subject themselves to the Roman church, without tolerating the exercise of any other religion, in city, village, farm-house, or building

[1] "Que por mas dureza que muestran en lo de la religion, deseando alguna libertad, al cabo se reduciran á contentarse en esta parte con lo que las otras villas que han venido a la obediencia, porque esto se ha de hacer asi en todo caso, sin aflojar, ni permitir otra cosa en ninguna manera." Philip to Parma, 17 Aug., MS. just cited.

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thereto destined in the fields, or in any place whatsoever; and in this regulation there is to be no flaw, no change, no concession by convention or otherwise of a religious peace, or anything of the sort. They are all to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, and the exercise of that is alone to be permitted."[1]

This certainly was distinct enough, and nothing had been ever said in public to induce a belief in any modification of the principles on which Philip had uniformly acted. That monarch considered himself born to suppress heresy, and he had certainly been carrying out this work during his whole lifetime.

The King was willing, however, as Alexander had intimated in his negotiations with Antwerp, and previously in the capitulation of Brussels, Ghent, and other places, that there should be an absence of investigation into the private chambers of the heretics, during the period allotted them for choosing between the Papacy and exile.

"It may be permitted," said Philip, "to abstain from inquiring as to what the heretics are doing within their own doors, in a private way, without scandal, or any public exhibition of their rites *during a fixed time*. But this connivance, and the abstaining from executing the heretics, or from chastising them, even although they may be living very circumspectly, is to be expressed in very vague terms."[2]

Being most anxious to provide against a second crop of heretics to succeed the first, which he was determined to

[1] "Con todo sentiera yo mucho ver esta tolerancia sin limite. Ha de ser el primo paso recebir y tener solamente el egercicio catolico, y subjetarse á la obediencia de la Yglesia Romana, sin tolerar ni consentir por via de capitulacion otro ningun egercicio en ninguna villa, ni granja, ni parte destinada para el en el campo ni dentro en los lugares . . . . y quanto á esto no ha de haber quiebra ni mudanza ni concederles por concierto ninguna libertad de consciencias, ni religions-fried, ni otra cosa semejante, sino que abracen la Cat^ca Rom^ana con solo el egercicio della," &c. Philip II. to Parma, 17 Aug. 1585. Archivo de Simancas MS.

[2] "Mas bien se podra debaxo desto no inquirir lo que los hereges hicieron dentro de sus casas y los unos en las de los otros enforma privada y sin escandalo, ni muestra de egercicio publico de sus sectas y herrores durante el dicho tiempo, porque esta dissimulacion, y no los egecutar ni castigar aunque en lo del mal egemplo viven menos recatados que debrian La de ser en forma bien larga." (Ibid.)

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uproot, he took pains to enjoin with his own hand upon Parma the necessity of putting in Catholic schoolmasters and mistresses to the exclusion of reformed teachers into all the seminaries of the recovered Provinces, in order that all the boys and girls might grow up in thorough orthodoxy.[1]

Yet this was the man from whom Sainte Aldegonde imagined the possibility of obtaining a religious peace.

Ten days after the capitulation, Parma made his triumphal entrance into Antwerp; but, according to his agreement, he spared the citizens the presence of the Spanish and Italian soldiers, the military procession being composed of the Germans and Walloons. Escorted by his body-guard, and surrounded by a knot of magnates and veterans, among whom the Duke of Arschot, the Prince of Chimay, the Counts Mansfeld, Egmont, and Aremberg, were conspicuous, Alexander proceeded towards the captured city. He was met at the Keyser Gate by a triumphal chariot of gorgeous workmanship, in which sat the fair nymph Antwerpia, magnificently bedizened, and accompanied by a group of beautiful maidens. Antwerpia welcomed the conqueror with a kiss, recited a poem in his honour, and bestowed upon him the keys of the city, one of which was in gold. This the Prince immediately fastened to the chain around his neck, from which was suspended the lamb of the golden fleece, with which order he had just been, amid great pomp and ceremony, invested.

On the public square called the Mere, the Genoese merchants had erected two rostral columns, each surmounted by a colossal image, representing respectively Alexander of Macedon and Alexander of Parma. Before the house of Portugal was an enormous phœnix, expanding her wings quite across the street; while, in other parts of the town, the procession was met by ships of war, elephants, dromedaries, whales, dragons, and other triumphal phenomena. In the market-place were seven statues in copper, personifying the seven planets, together with an eighth representing Bacchus; and perhaps there were good mythological reasons why the

1 Philip II. to Parma, MS. just cited.

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god of wine, together with so large a portion of our solar system, should be done in copper by Jacob Jongeling, to honour the triumph of Alexander, although the key to the enigma has been lost.[1]

The cathedral had been thoroughly fumigated with frankincense, and besprinkled with holy water, to purify the sacred precincts from their recent pollution by the reformed rites; and the Protestant pulpits which had been placed there, had been soundly beaten with rods, and then burned to ashes.[2] The procession entered within its walls, where a magnificent 'Te Deum' was performed, and then, after much cannon-firing, bell-ringing, torch-light exhibition, and other pyrotechnics, the Prince made his way at last to the palace provided for him. The glittering display, by which the royalists celebrated their triumph, lasted three days' long, the city being thronged from all the country round with eager and frivolous spectators, who were never wearied with examining the wonders of the bridge and the forts, and with gazing at the tragic memorials which still remained of the fight on the Kowenstyn.

During this interval, the Spanish and Italian soldiery, not willing to be outdone in demonstrations of respect to their chief, nor defrauded of their rightful claim to a holiday, amused themselves with preparing a demonstration of a novel character. The bridge, which, as it was well known, was to be destroyed within a very few days, was adorned with triumphal arches, and decked with trees and flowering plants; its roadway was strewed with branches; and the palisades, parapets, and forts, were garnished with wreaths, emblems, and poetical inscriptions in honour of the Prince. The soldiers themselves, attired in verdurous garments of foliage and flower-work, their swart faces adorned with roses and lilies, paraded the bridge and the dyke in fantastic procession with clash of cymbal and flourish of trumpet, dancing, singing, and discharging their carbines, in all the delirium of triumph. Nor was a suitable termination to the

[1] Bor, II. 622. Hoofd Vervolgh, 117. Strada, II. 383, *seq.* Meteren, XII. 225. Mertens and Torfs V. 258.

[2] Le Petit II. 519.

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festival wanting, for Alexander, pleased with the genial character of these demonstrations, repaired himself to the bridge, where he was received with shouts of rapture by his army, thus whimsically converted into a horde of fauns and satyrs. Afterwards, a magnificent banquet was served to the soldiers upon the bridge. The whole extent of its surface, from the Flemish to the Brabant shore—the scene so lately of deadly combat, and of the midnight havoc caused by infernal enginery—was changed, as if by the stroke of a wand, into a picture of sylvan and Arcadian merry-making, and spread with tables laden with delicate viands. Here sat that host of war-bronzed figures, banqueting at their ease, their heads crowned with flowers, while the highest magnates of the army, humouring them in their masquerade, served them with dainties, and filled their goblets with wine.[1]

After these festivities had been concluded, Parma set himself to practical business. There had been a great opposition, during the discussion of the articles of capitulation to the reconstruction of the famous citadel. That fortress had been always considered, not as a defence of the place against a foreign enemy, but as an instrument to curb the burghers themselves beneath a hostile power. The city magistrates, however, as well as the dean and chief officers in all the guilds and fraternities, were at once changed by Parma—Catholics being uniformly substituted for heretics.[2] In consequence, it was not difficult to bring about a change of opinion in the broad council. It is true that neither Papists nor Calvinists regarded with much satisfaction the prospect of military violence being substituted for civic rule, but in the first effusion of loyalty, and in the triumph of the ancient religion, they forgot the absolute ruin to which their own action was now condemning their city. Champagny, who had once covered himself with glory by his heroic though unsuccessful efforts to save Antwerp from the dreadful "Spanish fury" which had descended from that very citadel,

[1] Strada, II. 387.
[2] Parma to Philip II., 30 Sept., 1585, | Archivo de Simancas MS. Same to same, 11 Nov. 1585. (Ibid.)

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was now appointed governor of the town, and devoted himself to the reconstruction of the hated fortress. "Champagny has particularly aided me," wrote Parma, "with his rhetoric and clever management, and has brought the broad council itself to propose that the citadel should be rebuilt. It will therefore be done, as by the burghers themselves, without your Majesty or myself appearing to desire it."[1]

This was, in truth, a triumph of "rhetoric and clever management," nor could a city well abase itself more completely, kneeling thus cheerfully at its conqueror's feet, and requesting permission to put the yoke upon its own neck. "The erection of the castle has thus been determined upon," said Parma, "and I am supposed to know nothing of the resolution."[2]

A little later he observed that they were "working away most furiously at the citadel, and that within a month it would be stronger than it ever had been before."[3]

The building went on, indeed, with astonishing celerity, the fortress rising out of its ruins almost as rapidly, under the hands of the royalists, as it had been demolished, but a few years before, by the patriots. The old foundations still remained, and blocks of houses, which had been constructed out of its ruins, were thrown down that the materials might be again employed in its restoration.[4]

The citizens, impoverished and wretched, humbly demanded that the expense of building the citadel might be in part defrayed by the four hundred thousand florins in which they had been mulcted by the capitulation. "I don't marvel at this," said Parma, "for certainly the poor city is *most forlorn and poverty-stricken, the heretics having all left it.*"[5] It was not long before it was very satisfactorily established, that the presence of those same heretics and liberty of conscience for

[1] MS. Letter of 11 Nov. 1585, before cited. "Rhetorica y buena maña," &c.

[2] MS. Letter, 30 Sept., 1585, before cited.

[3] Letter of 11 Nov. 1585.

[4] Strada, II. 394.

[5] "Pues es cierto està la pobre villa pobrissima y alcanzadissima, habiendola dejado los hereges," &c. MS. letter last cited.

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all men, were indispensable conditions for the prosperity of the great capital. Its downfall was instantaneous. The merchants and industrious artisans all wandered away from the place which had been the seat of a world-wide traffic. Civilisation and commerce departed, and in their stead were the citadel and the Jesuits. By express command of Philip, that order, banished so recently, was reinstated in Antwerp, as well as throughout the obedient provinces; and all the schools and colleges were placed under its especial care. No children could be thenceforth instructed except by the lips of those fathers.[1] Here was a curb more efficacious even than the citadel. That fortress was at first garrisoned with Walloons and Germans. "I have not yet induced the citizens," said Parma, "to accept a Spanish garrison, nor am I surprised; so many of them remembering past events (alluding to the 'Spanish fury,' but not mentioning it by name), and observing the frequent mutinies at the present time. Before long, I expect, however, to make the Spaniards as acceptable and agreeable as the inhabitants of the country themselves."[2]

It may easily be supposed that Philip was pleased with the triumphs that had thus been achieved. He was even grateful, or affected to be grateful, to him who had achieved them. He awarded great praise to Alexander for his exertions, on the memorable occasions of the attack upon the bridge, and the battle of the Kowenstyn; but censured him affectionately for so rashly exposing his life. "I have no words," he said, "to render the thanks which are merited for all that you have been doing. I recommend you earnestly however to have a care for the security of your person, for that is of more consequence than all the rest."[3]

After the news of the reduction of the city, he again expressed gratification, but in rather cold language. "From such obstinate people," said he, "not more could be extracted than has been extracted; therefore the capitulation is satis-

[1] Strada, II. 389.

[2] MS. Letter, 11 Nov., 1585.

[3] "Ya yo no sé palabras con que daros las gracias que merece todo lo que ahi haceis, y asi no dire sino que os encomiendo mucho que mireis por la seguridad de vuestra persona, pues en esta va mas que en todo." Philip II. to Parma, 5 July, 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

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factory."[1] What more he wished to extract it would be difficult to say, for certainly the marrow had been extracted from the bones, and the dead city was thenceforth left to moulder under the blight of a foreign garrison and an army of Jesuits. "Perhaps religious affairs will improve before long,"[2] said Philip. They did improve very soon, as he understood the meaning of improvement. A solitude of religion soon brought with it a solitude in every other regard, and Antwerp became a desert, as Sainte Aldegonde had foretold would be the case.

The King had been by no means so calm, however, when the intelligence of the capitulation first reached him at Madrid. On the contrary, his oldest courtiers had never seen him exhibit such marks of hilarity.

When he first heard of the glorious victory at Lepanto, his countenance had remained impassive, and he had continued in the chapel at the devotional exercises which the messenger from Don John had interrupted. Only when the news of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew first reached him, had he displayed an amount of cheerfulness equal to that which he manifested at the fall of Antwerp. "Never," said Granvelle, "had the King been so radiant with joy as when he held in his hand the despatches which announced the capitulation."[3] The letters were brought to him after he had retired to rest, but his delight was so great that he could not remain in his bed. Rushing from his chamber, so soon as he had read them, to that of his dearly-beloved daughter, Clara Isabella, he knocked loudly at the door, and screaming through the keyhole the three words, "Antwerp is ours," returned precipitately again to his own apartment.[4]

It was the general opinion in Spain, that the capture of this city had terminated the resistance of the Netherlands. Holland and Zeeland would, it was thought, accept with very little hesitation the terms which Parma had been offering, through the agency of Sainte Aldegonde; and, with the

[1] "Sacar mas que lo que se ha sacado," &c. Philip to Parma, 5 Sept., 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Strada, II. 388, 389.

[4] Ibid.

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reduction of those two provinces, the Spanish dominion over the whole country would of course become absolute. Secretary Idiaquez observed, on drawing up instructions for Carlo Coloma, a Spanish financier then departing on special mission for the Provinces, that he would soon come back to Spain, for the Prince of Parma was just putting an end to the whole Belgic war.[1]

Time was to show whether Holland and Zeeland were as malleable as Antwerp, and whether there would not be a battle or two more to fight before that Belgic war would come to its end. Meantime Antwerp was securely fettered, while the spirit of commerce—to which its unexampled prosperity had been due—now took its flight to the lands where civil and religious liberty had found a home.

NOTE ON MARNIX DE SAINTE ALDEGONDE.

As every illustration of the career and character of this eminent personage excites constant interest in the Netherlands, I have here thrown together, in the form of an Appendix, many important and entirely unpublished details, drawn mainly from the Archives of Simancas, and from the State Paper Office and British Museum in London.

The ex-burgomaster seemed determined to counteract the policy of those Netherlanders who wished to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces to the English Queen. He had been earnestly in favour of annexation to France, for his sympathies and feelings were eminently French. He had never been a friend to England, and he was soon aware that a strong feeling of indignation—whether just or unjust—existed against him both in that country and in the Netherlands, on account of the surrender of Antwerp.

"I have had large conference with Villiers," wrote Sir John Norris to Walsingham, "he condemneth Ste. Aldegonde's doings, but will impute it to fear and not to malice. Ste. Aldegonde, notwithstanding that he was forbidden to come to Holland, and laid for at the fleet, yet stole secretly to Dort, where they say he

[1] Strada, II. 389.

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is staid, but I doubt he will be heard speak, and then assuredly he will do great hurt."[1]

It was most certainly Sainte Aldegonde's determination, so soon as the capitulation of Antwerp had been resolved upon, to do his utmost to restore all the independent Provinces to their ancient allegiance. Rather Spanish than English was his settled resolution. Liberty of religion, if possible—that was his cherished wish—but still more ardently, perhaps, did he desire to prevent the country from falling into the hands of Elizabeth.

"The Prince of Parma hath conceived such an assured hope of the fidelity of Aldegonde," wrote one of Walsingham's agents, Richard Tomson, "in reducing the Provinces, yet enemies, into a perfect subjection, that the Spaniards are so well persuaded of the man as if he had never been against them. They say, about the middle of this month, he departed for Zeeland and Holland, to prosecute the effect of his promises, and I am the more induced to believe that he is become altogether Spanish, for that the common bruit goeth that he hastened the surrendering of the town of Antwerp, after he had intelligence of the coming of the English succours."[2]

There was naturally much indignation felt in the independent Provinces, against all who had been thought instrumental in bringing about the reduction of the great cities of Flanders. Famars, governor of Mechlin, Van den Tympel, governor of Brussels, Martini, who had been active in effecting the capitulation of Antwerp, were all arrested in Holland. "From all that I can hear," said Parma, "it is likely that they will be very severely handled, which is the reason why Ste. Aldegonde, although he sent his wife and children to Holland, has not ventured thither himself. It appears that they threaten him there, but he means now to go, under pretext of demanding to justify himself from the imputations against him. Although he tells me freely that, without some amplification of the concessions hitherto made on the point of religion, he hopes for no good result, yet I trust that he will do good offices in the meantime, in spite of the difficulties which obstruct his efforts. On my part, every exertion will be made, and not without hope of some fruit, if not before, at least after, these people have become as tired of the English as they were of the French."[3]

[1] Sir John Norreys to Walsingham, Aug. 24 (O.S.), 1585. S. P. Office MS.

[2] Richard Tomson to Sir F. Walsingham, 29th August, 1585 (o.s.) S. P. Office, M.S.

[3] Parma to Philip II. Arch. de Sim. MS.

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Of this mutual ill-feeling between the English and the burgomaster, there can be no doubt whatever. The Queen's government was fully aware of his efforts to counteract its negotiation with the Netherlands, and to bring about their reconciliation with Spain. When the Earl of Leicester—as will soon be related—arrived in the Provinces, he was not long in comprehending his attitude and his influence.

"I wrote somewhat of Sir Aldegonde in putting his case," wrote Leicester, "but this is certain, I have the copy of his very letters sent hither to practise the peace not two days before I came, and this day one hath told me that loves him well, that he hates our countrymen unrecoverably. I am sorry for it."[1]

On the other hand, the Queen was very indignant with the man whom she looked upon as the paid agent of Spain. She considered him a renegade, the more dangerous because his previous services had been so illustrious. "Her Majesty's mislike towards Ste. Aldegonde continueth," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, "and she taketh offence that he was not restrained of his liberty by your Lordship's order."[2] It is unquestionable that the ex-burgomaster intended to do his best towards effecting the reconciliation of all the Provinces with Spain; and it is equally certain that the King had offered to pay him well, if he proved successful in his endeavours. There is no proof, however, and no probability that Sainte Aldegonde ever accepted or ever intended to accept the proffered bribe. On the contrary, his whole recorded career ought to disprove the supposition. Yet it is painful to find him, at this crisis, assiduous in his attempts to undo the great work of his own life, and still more distressing to find that great rewards were distinctly offered to him for such service. Immense promises had been frequently made no doubt to William the Silent; nor could any public man, in such times, be so pure that an attempt to tamper with him might not be made: but when the personage, thus solicited, was evidently acting in the interests of the tempters, it is not surprising that he should become the object of grave suspicion.

"It does not seem to me bad," wrote Philip to Parma, "this negotiation which you have commenced with Ste. Aldegonde, in order to gain him, and thus to employ his services in bringing about a reduction of the islands (Holland and Zeeland). In

[1] 'Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, in the years 1585 and 1586, edited by John Bruce.' Printed for the Camden Society, 1844. p. 27, 28, $\frac{15}{25}$ Dec. 1585.

[2] 'Leycester's Correspondence,' by Bruce p. 36, Dec. 1585.

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exchange for this work, any thing which you think proper to offer to him as a reward, will be capital well invested; but it must not be given until the job is done."[1]

But the job was hard to do, and Sainte Aldegonde cared nothing for the offered bribe. He was, however, most strangely confident of being able to overcome, on the one hand, the opposition of Holland and Zeeland to the hated authority of Spain, and, on the other, the intense abhorrence entertained by Philip to liberty of conscience.

Soon after the capitulation, he applied for a passport to visit those two Provinces. Permission to come was refused him. Honest men from Antwerp, he was informed, would be always welcome, but there was no room for him.[2] There was, however —or Parma persuaded himself that there was—a considerable party in those countries in favour of reconciliation with Spain. If the ex-burgomaster could gain a hearing, it was thought probable that his eloquence would prove very effective.

"We have been making efforts to bring about negotiations with Holland and Zeeland," wrote Alexander to Philip. "Gelderland and Overyssel likewise show signs of good disposition, but I have not soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad. As for Holland and Zeeland, there is a strong inclination on the part of the people to a reconciliation, if some concession could be made on the religious question, but the governors oppose it, because they are perverse, and are relying on assistance from England. Could this religious concession be made, an arrangement could, without doubt, be accomplished, and more quickly than people think. Nevertheless, in such a delicate matter, I am obliged to await your Majesty's exact instructions and ultimatum."[3]

He then proceeded to define exactly the position and intentions of the burgomaster.

"The government of Holland and Zeeland," he said, "have refused a passport to Ste. Aldegonde, and express dissatisfaction with him for having surrendered Antwerp so soon. They know that he has much credit with the people and with the ministers of the sects, and they are in much fear of him because he is inclined for peace, which is against their interests. They are,

[1] —— "que a trueque dello sera bien empleado lo que vieredes que combendra ofrecelle para darselo despues de hecho el efecto."—Philip II. to Parma, 5th Sept. 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

[2] Bor, II. 614–620. Hoofd Vervolgh, 116.

[3] Parma to Philip II. 30th Sept. 1585. Arch. de Sim. MS.

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therefore, endeavouring to counteract my negotiations with him. These have been, thus far, only in general terms. I have sought to induce him to perform the offices required, without giving him reason to expect any concession as to the exercise of religion. *He persuades himself that, in the end, there will be some satisfaction obtained upon this point*, and, under this impression he considers the peace as good as concluded, there remaining no doubt as to other matters. He has sent his wife to Zeeland, and is himself going to Germany, where, as he says, he will do all the good service that he can. He hopes that very shortly the Provinces will not only invite, but implore him to come to them; in which case, he promises me to perform miracles."[1]

Alexander then proceeded to pay a distinct tribute to Sainte Aldegonde's motives; and, when it is remembered that the statement thus made is contained in a secret despatch, in cipher, to the King, it may be assumed to convey the sincere opinion of the man most qualified to judge correctly as to this calumniated person's character.

"Ste. Aldegonde offers me wonders," he said, "and I have promised him that he shall be recompensed very largely; yet, although he is poor, I do not find him influenced by mercenary or selfish considerations, but only very set in opinions regarding his religion."[2]

The Prince had however no doubt of Sainte Aldegonde's sincerity, for sincerity was a leading characteristic of the man. His word, once given, was sacred, and he had given his word to do his best towards effecting a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain, and frustrating the efforts of England. "Through the agency of Ste. Aldegonde and that of others," wrote Parma, "I shall watch, day and night, to bring about a reduction of Holland and Zeeland, if humanly possible. I am quite persuaded that they will soon be sick of the English, who are now arriving, broken down, without arms or money, and obviously incapable of holding out very long. Doubtless, however, this English alliance, and the determination of the Queen to do her utmost against us, complicates matters, and assists the government of Holland and Zeeland in opposing the inclinations of their people."[3]

Nothing ever came of these intended negotiations. The

[1] Parma to Philip II., 30 Sept., MS. just cited.

[2] — "en el cual caso ofrece maravillas, como le he ofrecido yo de que será recompensado muy largamente, aunque si bien es pobre no le veo interesado, mas tan solamente puesto en la opinion de su religion." Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

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miracles were never wrought, and even had Sainte Aldegonde been as venal as he was suspected of being—which we have thus proof positive that he was not—he never could have obtained the recompense, which, according to Philip's thrifty policy, was not to be paid until it had been earned. Sainte Aldegonde's hands were clean. It is pity that we cannot render the same tribute to his political consistency of character. It is also certain that he remained—not without reason—for a long time under a cloud. He became the object of unbounded and reckless calumny. Antwerp had fallen, and the necessary consequence of its reduction was the complete and permanent prostration of its commerce and manufactures. These were transferred to the new, free, national, independent, and prosperous commonwealth that had risen in the "islands" which Parma and Sainte Aldegonde had vainly hoped to restore to their ancient servitude. In a very few years after the subjugation of Antwerp, it appeared by statistical documents that nearly all the manufactures of linen, coarse and fine cloths, serges, fustians, tapestry, gold embroidery, arras-work, silks, and velvets, had been transplanted to the towns of Holland and Zeeland, which were flourishing and thriving, while the Flemish and Brabantine cities had become mere dens of thieves and beggars. It was in the mistaken hope of averting this catastrophe—as melancholy as it was inevitable—and in despair of seeing all the Netherlands united, unless united in slavery, and in deep-rooted distrust of the designs and policy of England, that this statesman, once so distinguished, had listened to the insidious tongue of Parma. He had sought to effect a general reconciliation with Spain, and the only result of his efforts was a blight upon his own illustrious name.

He published a defence of his conduct, and a detailed account of the famous siege. His apology, at the time, was not considered conclusive, but his narrative remains one of the clearest and most trustworthy sources for the history of these important transactions. He was never brought to trial, but he discovered, with bitterness, that he had committed a fatal error, and that his political influence had passed away. He addressed numerous private epistles to eminent persons, indignantly denying the imputations against his character, and demanding an investigation. Among other letters he observed in one to Count Hohenlo, that he was astonished and grieved to find that all his faithful labours and sufferings in the cause of his fatherland had been forgotten in an hour. In place of praise and gratitude, he had reaped nothing but censure and calumny; because men ever

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judged, not by the merits, but by the issue. That common people should be so unjust, he said; was not to be wondered at, but of men like Hohenlo he had hoped better things. He asserted that he had saved Antwerp from another "Spanish fury," and from impending destruction—a city in which there was not a single regular soldier, and in which his personal authority was so slight that he was unable to count the number of his masters. If a man had ever performed a service to his country, he claimed to have done so in this capitulation. Nevertheless, he declared that he was the same Philip Marnix, earnestly devoted to the service of God, the true religion, and the fatherland; although he avowed himself weary of the war, and of this perpetual offering of the Netherland sovereignty to foreign potentates. He was now going, he said, to his estates in Zeeland; there to turn farmer again; renouncing public affairs, in the administration of which he had experienced so much ingratitude from his countrymen.[1] Count Maurice and the States of Holland and Zeeland wrote to him, however, in very plain language, describing the public indignation as so strong as to make it unsafe for him to visit the country.[2]

The Netherlands and England—so soon as they were united in policy—were, not without reason, indignant with the man who had made such strenuous efforts to prevent that union. The English were, in truth, deeply offended. He had systematically opposed their schemes, and to his prejudice against their country, and distrust of their intentions, they attributed the fall of Antwerp. Envoy Davison, after his return to Holland, on the conclusion of the English treaty, at once expressed his suspicions of the ex-burgomaster, and the great dangers to be apprehended from his presence in the free States. "Here is some working underhand," said he to Walsingham, "to draw hither Sainte Aldegonde, under a pretext of his justification, which—as it has hitherto been denied him—so is the sequel suspected, if he should obtain it before they were well settled here, betwixt her Majesty and them, considering the manifold presumptions that the subject of his journey should be little profitable or advantageous to the state of these poor countries, as tending, at the best, to the propounding of some general reconcilement."[3] It was certainly not without substantial grounds that the English and Hollanders, after concluding their articles of alliance, felt uneasy

[1] Bor, II. 614.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Davison to Walsingham, Sept. $\frac{4}{14}$ 1585 S. P. Office MS.

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at the possibility of finding their plans reversed by the intrigues of a man whom they knew to be a mediator between Spain and her revolted Provinces, and whom they suspected of being a venal agent of the Catholic King. It was given out that Philip had been induced to promise liberty of religion, in case of reconciliation. We have seen that Parma was at heart in favour of such a course, and that he was very desirous of inducing Marnix to believe in the possibility of obtaining such a boon, however certain the Prince had been made by the King's secret letters, that such a belief was a delusion. "Martini hath been examined," wrote Davison, "who confesseth both for himself and others, to be come hither by direction of the Prince of Parma and intelligence of Sainte Aldegonde, from whom he was first addressed by Villiers and afterwards to others for advice and assistance. That the scope of this direction was to induce them here to hearken to a peace, wherein the Prince of Parma promiseth them toleration of religion, although he confesseth yet to have no absolute power in that behalf, but hath written thereof to the King expressly, and *holdeth himself assured thereof by the first post*, as I have likewise been advertised from Rowland York, which if it had been propounded openly here before things had been concluded with her Majesty, and order taken for her assurance, your honour can judge what confusion it must of necessity have brought forth."[1]

At last, when Marnix had become convinced that the toleration would not arrive "by the very next mail from Spain," and that, in truth, such a blessing was not to be expected through the post-office at all, he felt an inward consciousness of the mistake which he had committed. Too credulously had he inclined his ear to the voice of Parma; too obstinately had he steeled his heart against Elizabeth, and he was now the more anxious to clear himself at least from the charges of corruption so clamorously made against him by Holland and by England. Conscious of no fault more censurable than credulity and prejudice, feeling that his long fidelity to the reformed religion ought to be a defence for him against his calumniators, he was desirous both to clear his own honour, and to do at least a tardy justice to England. He felt confident that loyal natures, like those of Davison and his colleagues at home, would recognize his own loyalty. He trusted, not without cause, to English honour, and coming to his manor-house of Zoubourg, near Flushing, he

[1] Davison to Walsingham, Sept. 1585.

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addressed a letter to the ambassador of Elizabeth, in which the strong desire to vindicate his aspersed integrity is quite manifest.

"I am very joyous," said he, "that coming hither in order to justify myself against the false and malignant imputations with which they charge me, I have learned your arrival here on the part of her Majesty, as well as the soon expected coming of the Earl of Leicester. I see, in truth, that the Lord God is just, and never abandons his own. I have never spared myself in the service of my country, and I would have sacrificed my life, a thousand times, had it been possible, in her cause. Now, I am receiving for all this a guerdon of blame and calumny, which is cast upon me in order to cover up faults which have been committed by others in past days. I hope, however, to come soon to give you welcome, and to speak more particularly to you of all these things. Meantime demanding my justification before these gentlemen, who ought to have known me better than to have added faith to such villanous imputations, I will entreat you that my definite justification, or condemnation,—if I have merited it,—may be reserved till the arrival of Lord Leicester." [1]

[1] Sainte Aldegonde to Davison, $\frac{\text{Oct. 30}}{\text{Nov. 9}}$ 1585, S. P. Office MS. (The letter is in French.)

Walsingham always entertained a high opinion of Sainte Aldegonde's integrity. "Je pourrois à bon droit estre taxé," wrote Marnix, in answer to a letter from Sir Francis, "ou de stupidité, ou d'ingratitude—d'autant plus qu' en une commune opinion, mesmes de ceux qui estoyent plus proches tesmoigns de mes actions, et avoyent plus de commodité d' en pouvoir juger à la verité, si ils en eussent prendre la peine il vous a pleu, en estant beaucoup plus esloigné, et plus environné de prejugés, maintenir constamment l'impression qu' aviez une fois conceue de mon integreté. * * * Et pleut à Dieu que j'eusse peu avoir gens de qualité et de jugement tels qu' est V. S. ou spectateurs, ou juges de mes conseils et procédures. Je m'asseure qu' en lieu de blâme, que, ou les ignorans ou les malicieux m'ont mis sus, j'en eusse rapporté louange et gloire. Tant y a que rends graces encore pour ce jour d'huy à mon Dieu, de ce qu' en ces grandes extremités, environnés de tant de difficultés, il ne m'a oncques si avant privé de son esprit, que je n'aye toujours eu mon seul but et la gloire de son nom et la conservation de ses eglises. Ce que je vous prie de croire, et vous asseure qu'en cette resolution je desire vivre et mourir." Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde to Walsingham, May $\frac{6}{16}$, 1586, from Zoubourg. S. P. Office MS.

"The Count Maurice," wrote envoy and counsellor Wilkes, a year later, from Utrecht, "is loved and respected here of the people, for the merits of his late father; and is (so far as I can judge) like to succeed him in wisdom and sufficiency. I cannot discern that there is any doubt to be had of him, that he should be led away by any persuasion to seek his advancement but by her Majesty; and Sainte Aldegonde, *contrary to the opinion conceived of him by her Majesty, is noted here of all men to be a good patriot, and worthy to be employed in the services here*, in respect of his ability and wisdom, *howbeit I perceive (to take away the offence that may be mustered to her Majesty) they are contented to forbear the use of his services.*" Wilkes to the Lords of Council, 20th Aug. 1586. S. P. Office MS.

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This certainly was not the language of a culprit. Nevertheless, his words did not immediately make a deep impression on the hearts of those who heard him. He had come secretly to his house at Zoubourg, having previously published his memorable apology; and in accordance with the wishes of the English government, he was immediately confined to his own house. Confidence in the intention of a statesman, who had at least committed such grave errors of judgment, and who had been so deeply suspected of darker faults, was not likely very soon to revive. So far from shrinking from an investigation which would have been dangerous, even to his life, had the charges against his honour been founded in fact, he boldly demanded to be confronted with his accusers, in order that he might explain his conduct before all the world. "Sir, yesternight, at the shutting of the gates," wrote Davison to Walsingham,—transmitting the little note from Marnix, which has just been cited—"I was advertised that Ste. Aldegonde was not an hour before secretly landed at the head on the other side the Rammekens, and come to his house at Zoubourg, having prepared his way by an apology, newly published in his defence, whereof I have as yet recovered one only copy, which herewith I send your honour. This day, whilst I was at dinner, he sent his son unto me, with a few lines, whereof I send you the copy, advertising me of his arrival (which he knew I understood before), together with the desire he had to see me, and speak with me, if the States, before whom he was to come to purge himself of the crimes wherewith he stood, as he saith, unjustly charged, would vouchsafe him so much liberty. The same morning, the council of Zeeland, taking knowledge of his arrival, sent unto him the pensioner of Middelburgh and this town, to sound the causes of his coming, and to will him, in their behalf, to keep his house, and to forbear all meddling by word or writing, with any whatsoever, till they should further advise and determine in his cause. In defence thereof, he fell into large and particular discourse with the deputies, accusing his enemies of malice and untruth, offering himself to any trial, and to abide what punishment the laws should lay upon him, if he were found guilty of the crimes imputed to him. Touching the cause of his coming, he pretended and protested that he had no other end than his simple justification, preferring any hazard he might incur thereby, to his honour and good fame."[1] As to the great question at issue,

[1] Davison to Walsingham, Nov. $\frac{1}{11}$ 1585. (S. P. Office, MS.)

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Marnix had at last become conscious that he had been a victim to Spanish dissimulation, and that Alexander Farnese was in reality quite powerless to make that concession of religious liberty, without which a reconciliation between Holland and Philip was impossible. "Whereas," said Davison, "it was supposed that Ste. Aldegonde had commission from the Prince of Parma to make some offer of peace, he assured them of the contrary as a thing which neither the Prince had any power to yield unto with the surety of religion, or himself would, in conscience, persuade without it; with a number of other particularities in his excuse; amongst the rest, allowing and commending in his speech, the course they had taken with her Majesty, as the only safe way of deliverance for these afflicted countries—letting them understand how much the news thereof—specially since the entry of our garrison into this place (which before they would in no sort believe), hath troubled the enemy, who doth what he may to suppress the bruit thereof, and yet comforteth himself with the hope that between the factions and partialities nourished by his industry, and musters among the towns, especially in Holland and Zeeland (where he is persuaded to find some pliable to a reconcilement,) and the disorders and misgovernment of our people, there will be yet occasion offered him to make his profit and advantage. I find that the gentleman hath here many friends indifferently persuaded of his innocency, notwithstanding the closing up of his apology doth make but little for him. Howsoever it be, it falleth out the better that the treaty with her Majesty is finished, and the cautionary towns assured before his coming, which, if he be ill affected, will I hope either reform his judgment or restrain his will. I will not forget to do the best I can to sift and decipher him yet more narrowly and particularly."[1]

Thus, while the scales had at length fallen from the eyes of Marnix, it was not strange that the confidence which he now began to entertain in the policy of England, should not be met, at the outset, with a corresponding sentiment on the part of the statesman by whom that policy was regulated. "Howsoever Ste. Aldegonde would seem to purge himself," said Davison, "it is suspected that his end is dangerous. I have done what *I may to restrain him, so nevertheless as it may not seem to come from me.*"[2] And again—"Ste. Aldegonde," he wrote, "continueth still our neighbor at his house between this and Middelburg.

[1] Davison to Walsingham, MS. just cited. [2] Ibid.

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yet unmolested. He findeth many favourers, and, I fear, doth no good offices. He desireth to be reserved till the coming of my Lord of Leicester, before whom he pretends a desired trial." [1]

This covert demeanour on the part of the ambassador was in accordance with the wishes of his government. It was thought necessary that Sainte Aldegonde should be kept under arrest until the arrival of the Earl, but deemed preferable that the restraint should proceed from the action of the States rather than from the order of the Queen. Davison was fulfilling orders in attempting, by underhand means, to deprive Marnix, for a time, of his liberty. "Let him, I pray you, remain in good safety in any wise," [2] wrote Leicester, who was uneasy at the thought of so influential, and, as he thought, so ill-affected a person being at large, but at the same time disposed to look dispassionately upon his past conduct, and to do justice, according to the results of an investigation. "It is thought meet," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "that you should do your best endeavour to procure that Ste. Aldegonde may be restrained, which in mine opinion were fit to be handled in such sort, as the restraint might rather proceed from themselves than by your solicitation. And yet rather than he should remain at liberty to practise underhand, whereof you seem to stand in great doubt, it is thought meet that you should make yourself a partizan, to seek by all the means that you may to have him restrained under the guard of some well affected patriot until the Earl's coming, at what time his cause may receive examination." [3]

This was, however, a result somewhat difficult to accomplish; for twenty years of noble service in the cause of liberty had not been utterly in vain, and there were many magnanimous spirits to sympathize with a great man struggling thus in the meshes of calumny. That the man who challenged rather than shunned investigation, should be thrown into prison, as if he were a detected felon upon the point of absconding, seemed a heartless and superfluous precaution. Yet Davison and others still feared the man whom they felt obliged to regard as a baffled intriguer. "Touching the restraint of Ste. Aldegonde," wrote Davison to Lord Burghley, "which I had order from Mr. Secretary to procure underhand, I find the difficulty will be

[1] Davison to ——, Nov. $\frac{11}{21}$, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

[2] Leicester to Davison, Nov. $\frac{10}{20}$, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

[3] Minute of Walsingham, Nov. $\frac{19}{29}$, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

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great in regard of his many friends and favourers, preoccupied with some opinion of his innocence, although I have travailled with divers of them underhand, and am promised that some order shall be taken in that behalf, which I think will be harder to execute as long as Count Maurice is here. For Ste. Aldegonde's affection, I find continual matter to suspect it inclined to a peace, and that as one notably prejudging our scope and proceeding in this cause, doth lie in wait for an occasion to set it forward, being, as it seems, fed with a hope of 'telle quelle liberté de conscience,' which the Prince of Parma and others of his council have, as he confesseth, earnestly solicited at the King's hands. This appeareth, in truth, the only apt and easy way for them to prevail both against religion and the liberty of these poor countries, having thereby once recovered the authority which must necessarily follow a peace, to renew and alter the magistrates of the particular towns, which, being at their devotion, may turn, as we say, all upside down, and so in an instant being under their servitude, if not wholly, at the least in a great part of the country, leaving so much the less to do about the rest, a thing confessed and looked for of all men of any judgment here, if the drift of our peace-makers may take effect."[1]

Sainte Aldegonde had been cured of his suspicions of England, and at last the purity of his own character shone through the mists.

One winter's morning, two days after Christmas, 1585, Colonel Morgan, an ingenuous Welshman, whom we have seen doing much hard fighting on Kowenstyn Dyke, and at other places, and who now commanded the garrison at Flushing, was taking a walk outside the gates, and inhaling the salt breezes from the ocean. While thus engaged he met a gentleman coming along, staff in hand, at a brisk pace towards the town, who soon proved to be no other than the distinguished and deeply suspected Sainte Aldegonde. The two got at once into conversation. "He began," said Morgan, "by cunning insinuations, to wade into matters of state, and at the last fell to touching the principal points, to wit, her Majesty's entrance into the cause now in hand, which, quoth he, was an action of high importance, considering how much it behoved her to go through the same, as well in regard of the hope that thereby was given to the distressed people of these parts, as also in consideration of that worthy personage whom she hath here placed, whose estate and credit may not be suffered

[1] Davison to Burghley, $\frac{\text{Nov. 29}}{\text{Dec. 9}}$ 1585, S. P. Office MS.

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to quail, but must be upholden as becometh the lieutenant of such a princess as her Majesty."[1]

"The opportunity thus offered," continued honest Morgan, "and the way opened by himself, I thought good to discourse with him to the full, partly to see the end and drift of his induced talk, and consequently to touch his quick in the suspected cause of Antwerp."[2] And thus, word for word, taken down faithfully the same day, proceeded the dialogue that wintry morning, near three centuries ago. From that simple record—mouldering unseen and unthought of for ages, beneath piles of official dust—the forms of the illustrious Fleming and the bold Welsh colonel, seem to start, for a brief moment, out of the three hundred years of sleep which have succeeded their energetic existence upon earth. And so, with the bleak winds of December whistling over the breakers of the North Sea, the two discoursed together, as they paced along the coast.

Morgan.—"I charge you with your want of confidence in her Majesty's promised aid. 'Twas a thing of no small moment had it been embraced when it was first most graciously offered."

Sainte Aldegonde.—"I left not her prince-like purpose unknown to the States, who too coldly and carelessly passed over the benefit thereof, until it was too late to put the same in practice. For my own part, I acknowledge that indeed I thought some further advice would either alter or at least detract from the accomplishment of her determination. I thought this the rather because she had so long been wedded to peace, and I supposed it impossible to divorce her from so sweet a spouse. But, set it down that she were resolute, yet the sickness of Antwerp was so dangerous, as it was to be doubted the patient would be dead before the physician could come. I protest that the state of the town was much worse than was known to any but myself and some few private persons. The want of victuals was far greater than they durst bewray, fearing lest the common people, perceiving the plague of famine to be at hand, would rather grow desperate than patiently expect some happy event. For as they were many in number, so were they wonderfully divided: some being Martinists, some Papists, some neither the one nor the other, but generally given to be factious, so that the horror at home was equal to the hazard abroad."

Morgan.—"But you forget the motion made by the martial

[1] Sir Thomas Morgan to Sir F. Walsingham, Jan. $\frac{1}{11}$, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

[2] Ibid.

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men for putting out of the town such as were simple artificers, with women and children, mouths that consumed meat, but stood in no stead for defence."

Sainte Aldegonde.—"Alas, alas! would you have had me guilty of the slaughter of so many innocents, whose lives were committed to my charge, as well as the best? Or might I have answered my God when those massacred creatures should have stood up against me, that the hope of Antwerp's deliverance was purchased with the blood of so many simple souls? No, no.—I should have found my conscience such a hell and continual worm as the gnawing thereof would have been more painful and bitter than the possession of the whole world would have been pleasant."

Morgan continued to press the various points which had created suspicion as to the character and motives of Marnix, and point by point Marnix answered his antagonist, impressing him, armed as he had been in distrust, with an irresistible conviction as to the loftiness of the nature which had been so much calumniated.

Sainte Aldegonde (with vehemence).—"I do assure you, in conclusion, that I have solemnly vowed service and duty to her Majesty, which I am ready to perform where and when it may best like her to use the same. I will add moreover that I have oftentimes determined to pass into England to make my own purgation, yet fearing lest her Highness would mislike so bold a resolution, I have checked that purpose with a resolution to tarry the Lord's leisure, until some better opportunity might answer my desire. For since I know not how I stand in her grace, unwilling I am to attempt her presence without permission; but might it please her to command my attendance, I should not only most joyfully accomplish the same, but also satisfy her of and in all such matters as I stand charged with, and afterwards spend life, land, and goods, to witness my duty towards her Highness."

Morgan.—"I tell you plainly, that if you are in heart the same man that you seem outwardly to be, I doubt not but her Majesty might easily be persuaded to conceive a gracious opinion of you. For mine own part, I will surely advertise Sir Francis Walsingham of as much matter as this present conference hath ministered.

"Hereof," said the Colonel—when, according to his promise, faithfully recording the conversation in all its details for Mr. Secretary's benefit,—"he seemed not only content but most

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glad. Therefore I beseech your honour to vouchsafe some few lines herein, that I may return him some part of your mind. I have already written thereof to Sir Philip Sidney, lord governor of Flushing, with request that his Excellency the Earl of Leicester may presently be made acquainted with the cause."

Indeed the brave Welshman was thoroughly converted from his suspicions by the earnest language and sympathetic presence of the fallen statesman. This result of the conference was creditable to the ingenuous character of both personages.

"Thus did he," wrote Morgan to Sir Francis, "from point to point answer all objections from the first to the last, and that in such sound and substantial manner, with a strong show of truth, as I think his very enemies, having heard his tale, would be satisfied. And truly, Sir, as heretofore I have thought hardly of him, being led by a superficial judgment of things as they stood in outward appearance; so now, having pierced deep, and weighed causes by a sounder and more deliberate consideration, I find myself somewhat changed in conceit—not so much carried away by the sweetness of his speech, as confirmed by the force of his religious profession, wherein he remaineth constant, without wavering—an argument of great strength to set him free from treacherous attempts; but as I am herein least able and most unworthy to yield any censure, much less to give advice, so I leave the man and the matter to your honour's opinion. Only (your graver judgment reserved) thus I think, that it were good either to employ him as a friend, or as an enemy to remove him farther from us, being a man of such action as the world knoweth he is. And to conclude," added Morgan, "this was the upshot between us."[1]

Nevertheless, he remained in this obscurity for a long period.[2] When, towards the close of the year 1585, the English government was established in Holland, he was the object of constant suspicion.

"Here is Aldegonde," wrote Sir Philip Sidney to Lord Leicester from Flushing, "a man greatly suspected, but by no man charged. He lives restrained to his own house, and for aught I can find, deals with nothing, only desiring to have his cause wholly referred to your Lordship, and therefore, with the best heed I can to his proceedings, I will leave him to his clearing or condemning, when your Lordship shall hear him."[3]

[1] Thomas Morgan to Sir F. Walsingham, MS. just cited.

[2] Bor, II. 610–614. Hoofd Vervolgh, 116, 117. Wagenaar, viii. 83, 84.

[3] Sir P. Sidney to Earl of Leicester, Brit. Mus. Galba. C. viii. 213. MS.

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In another letter, Sir Philip again spoke of Sainte Aldegonde as "one of whom he kept a good opinion, and yet a suspicious eye." [1]

Leicester himself was excessively anxious on the subject, deeply fearing the designs of a man whom he deemed so mischievous, and being earnestly desirous that he should not elude the chastisement which he seemed to deserve.

"Touching Ste. Aldegonde," he wrote to Davison, "I grieve that he is at his house without good guard. I do earnestly pray you to move such as have power presently to commit a guard about him, for I know he is a dangerous and a bold man, and presumes yet to carry all, for he hath made many promises to the Prince of Parma. I would he were in Fort Rammekyns, or else that Mr. Russell had charge of him, with a recommendation from me to Russell to look well to him till I shall arrive. You must have been so commanded in this from her Majesty, for she thinks he is in close and safe guard. If he is not, look for a turn of all things, for he hath friends, I know." [2]

But very soon after his arrival, the Earl, on examining into the matter, saw fit to change his opinions and his language. Persuaded, in spite of his previous convictions, even as the honest Welsh colonel had been, of the upright character of the man, and feeling sure that a change had come over the feelings of Marnix himself in regard to the English alliance, Leicester at once interested himself in removing the prejudices entertained towards him by the Queen.

"Now a few words for Ste. Aldegonde," said he in his earliest despatches from Holland; "I will beseech her Majesty to stay her judgment till I write next. If the man be as he now seemeth, it were pity to lose him, for he is indeed marvellously friended. Her Majesty will think, I know, that I am easily pacified or led in such a matter, but I trust so to deal as she shall give me thanks. Once if he do offer service it is sure enough, for *he is esteemed that way above all the men in this country for his word, if he give it.* His worst enemies here procure me to win him, for sure, just matter for his life there is none. He would fain come into England, so far is he come already, and doth extol her Majesty for this work of hers to heaven, and confesseth, till now an angel could not make him believe it." [3]

[1] Sir P. Sidney to Earl of Leicester, 19th Feb. 1586. Brit. Mus. Galba. C. ix. p. 93.

[2] Leicester to Davison, Nov. $\frac{18}{28}$, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

[3] Bruce, 'Leycest. Corresp.' p. 33, 34.

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Here certainly was a noble tribute paid unconsciously, as it were, to the character of the maligned statesman. "Above all the men in the country for his word, if he give it." What wonder that Orange had leaned upon him, that Alexander had sought to gain him, and how much does it add to our bitter regret that his prejudices against England should not have been removed until too late for Antwerp and for his own usefulness. Had his good angel really been present to make him believe in that "work of her Majesty," when his ear was open to the seductions of Parma, the destiny of Belgium and his own subsequent career might have been more fortunate than they became.

The Queen was slow to return from her prejudices. She believed—not without reason—that the opposition of Ste. Aldegonde to her policy had been disastrous to the cause both of England and the Netherlands; and it had been her desire that he should be imprisoned, and tried for his life. Her councillors came gradually to take a more favourable view of the case, and to be moved by the pathetic attitude of the man who had once been so conspicuous.

"I did acquaint Sir Christopher Hatton," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, "with the letter which Ste. Aldegonde wrote to your Lordship, which, carrying a true picture of an afflicted mind, cannot but move an honest heart, weighing the rare parts the gentleman is endowed withal, to pity his distressed estate, and to procure him relief and comfort, which Mr. Vice-Chamberlain (Hatton) hath promised on his part to perform. I thought good to send Ste. Aldegonde's letter unto the Lord Treasurer (Burghley), who heretofore has carried a hard conceit of the gentleman, hoping that the view of his letter will breed some remorse towards him. I have also prayed his Lordship, if he see cause, to acquaint her Majesty with the said letter."[1]

But his high public career was closed. He lived down calumny, and put his enemies to shame, but the fatal error which he had committed, in taking the side of Spain rather than of England at so momentous a crisis, could never be repaired. He regained the good opinion of the most virtuous and eminent personages in Europe, but in the noon of life he voluntarily withdrew from public affairs. The circumstances just detailed had made him impossible as a political leader, and it was equally impossible for him to play a secondary part. He occasionally consented to be

[1] Bruce, 'Leycest. Corresp.,' pp. 31, 34.

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employed in special diplomatic missions, but the serious avocations of his life now became theological and literary. He sought —in his own words—to penetrate himself still more deeply than ever with the spirit of the reformation, and to imbue the minds of the young with that deep love for the reformed religion which had been the guiding thought of his own career. He often spoke with a sigh of his compulsory exile from the field where he had been so conspicuous all his lifetime; he bitterly lamented the vanished dream of the great national union between Belgium and Holland, which had flattered his youth and his manhood; and he sometimes alluded with bitterness to the calumny which had crippled him of his usefulness. He might have played a distinguished part in that powerful commonwealth which was so steadily and splendidly arising out of the lagunes of Zeeland and Holland, but destiny and calumny and his own error had decided otherwise.

"From the depth of my exile—" he said, "for I am resolved to retire, I know not where, into Germany, perhaps into Sarmatia, I shall look from afar upon the calamities of my country. That which to me is most mournful is no longer to be able to assist my fatherland by my counsels and my actions."[1] He did not go into exile, but remained chiefly at his mansion of Zoubourg, occupied with agriculture and with profound study. Many noble works conspicuous in the literature of the epoch — were the results of his learned leisure; and the name of Marnix of Sainte Aldegonde will be always as dear to the lovers of science and letters as to the believers in civil and religious liberty. At the request of the States of Holland he undertook, in 1593, a translation of the Scriptures from the original, and he was at the same time deeply engaged with a History of Christianity, which he intended for his literary master-piece. The man whose sword had done knightly service on many a battle-field for freedom, whose tongue had controlled mobs and senates, courts and councils, whose subtle spirit had metamorphosed itself into a thousand shapes to do battle with the genius of tyranny, now quenched the feverish agitation of his youth and manhood in Hebrew and classical lore. A grand and noble figure always: most pathetic when thus redeeming by vigorous but solitary and melancholy hard labor, the political error which had condemned him to retirement. To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature. Repose in the other world, "Repos ailleurs" was the device which he assumed in earliest youth, and to which he was faithful all his days.

A great and good man whose life had been brim-full of noble

[1] Commentaire sur les Affaires d'Anvers.'

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deeds, and who had been led astray from the path, not of virtue, but of sound policy, by his own prejudices and by the fascination of an intellect even more brilliant than his own, he at least enjoyed in his retirement whatever good may come from hearty and genuine labor, and from the high regard entertained for him by the noblest spirits among his contemporaries.

"They tell me," said La Noue, "that the Seigneur de Ste. Aldegonde has been suspected by the Hollanders and the English. I am deeply grieved, for 'tis a personage worthy to be employed. I have always known him to be a zealous friend of his religion and his country, and I will bear him this testimony, *that his hands and his heart are clean.* Had it been otherwise, I must have known it. His example has made me regret the less the promise I was obliged to make, never to bear arms again in the Netherlands. For I have thought that since this man, who has so much credit and authority among your people, after having done his duty well, has not failed to be calumniated and ejected from service, what would they have done with me, who am a stranger, had I continued in their employment? The consul Terentius Varro lost, by his fault, the battle of Cannæ; nevertheless, when he returned to Rome, offering the remainder of his life in the cause of his Republic reduced to extremity, he was not rejected, but well received, because he hoped well for the country. It is not to be imputed as blame to Ste. Aldegonde that he lost Antwerp, for he surrendered when it could not be saved. What I now say is drawn from me by the compassion I feel when persons of merit suffer without cause at the hands of their fellow citizens. In these terrible tempests, as it is a duty rigorously to punish the betrayers of their country, even so it is an obligation upon us to honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors, that we may all encourage each other to do the right."[1]

Strange too as it may now seem to us, a reconciliation of the Netherlands with Philip was not thought an impossibility by other experienced and sagacious patriots, besides Marnix. Even Olden-Barneveld, on taking office as Holland's Advocate, at this period, made it a condition that his service was to last only until the reunion of the Provinces with Spain.[2]

There was another illustrious personage in a foreign land who ever rendered homage to the character of the retired Netherland statesman. Amid the desolation of France, Duplessis Mornay often solaced himself by distant communion with that kindred and sympathizing spirit.

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c. I. 79, 80.
[2] Willems, 'Mengelingen,' p. 389.

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"Plunged in public annoyances," he wrote to Sainte Aldegonde, "I find no consolation, except in conference with the good, and among the good I hold you for one of the best. With such men I had rather sigh profoundly than laugh heartily with others. In particular, Sir, do me the honor to love me, and believe that I honor you singularly. Impart to me something from your solitude, for I consider your deserts to be more fruitful and fertile than our most cultivated habitations. As for me, think of me as of a man drowning in the anxieties of the time, but desirous, if possible, of swimming to solitude." [1]

Thus solitary, yet thus befriended,—remote from public employment, yet ever employed, doing his daily work with all his soul and strength, Marnix passed the fifteen years yet remaining to him. Death surprised him at last, at Leyden, in the year 1598, while steadily laboring upon his Flemish translation of the Old Testament, and upon the great political, theological, controversial, and satirical work on the differences of religion, which remains the most stately, though unfinished, monument of his literary genius. At the age of sixty he went at last to the repose which he had denied to himself on earth. "Repos ailleurs." [2]

[1] "Memoires and Corresp. de Duplessis Mornay," vi. 35.

[2] I am bound to state that there is a single passage in one of Parma's letters to Philip, which contains a somewhat suspicious allusion to Marnix. Were it not for the distinct assertion of Farnese, already cited, to the disinterested character of the burgomaster, and to his elevation above mercenary considerations, the observation now alluded to would be still more painful.

Six months after the fall of Antwerp, the Prince informed his sovereign that Sainte Aldegonde had not yet gone to Germany, but was still in Zeeland, where they were treating him with great attention, but conferring no authority upon him. "Those in power," added Farnese, "distrust him, because they see him inclined to that party, to which, when he can—unless I deceive myself—he will give his support. If he had not found the English already introduced, I think they would have made less of him, and that he would have accomplished some valuable piece of service. I do not *fail to send compliments*, as well to him, as to others who may prove useful agents, and to do all I can to keep them in their good dispositions, and in this course I shall ever persist, keeping awake by day and night."

"Desconfiando per verle inclinado a la parte a la cual cuando puede, sino me engaño, creo ajudará, y sino hallará introducidos los Ingleses, creo hecharen menos de el, y que hiciera algun buen efeto. Yo asi a el, como a los demas medios que me parecen ser a proposito, no dejo de embiar recaüdos,* ni de procurar tenerlos en su buen proposito, y en la dicha conformidad lo hire, haciendo siempre, desvelandome de dia y de noche," &c., &c. Parma to Philip II. 28th Feb., 1586. Archivo de Simancas MS.

* The word "recando" or "recado" means a complimentary message, which might or might not, be accompanied with more solid arguments.

It has been seen that Philip authorized Farnese to offer large rewards to Marnix, with the stipulation that they were not to be conferred until the service required had been rendered. On the other hand, the Prince privately assured the King that the man whom they so much wished to gain, was not to be won by a bribe. After scrupulously examining the evidence, I can not resist a conclusion favourable to the purity of Marnix.

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CHAPTER VI.

Policy of England — Diplomatic Coquetry — Dutch Envoys in England — Conference of Ortel and Walsingham — Interview with Leicester — Private Audience of the Queen — Letters of the States-General — Ill Effects of Gilpin's Despatch — Close Bargaining of the Queen and States — Guarantees required by England — England's comparative Weakness — The English characterised — Paul Hentzner — The Envoys in London — Their Characters — Olden-Barneveldt described — Reception at Greenwich — Speech of Menin — Reply of the Queen — Memorial of the Envoys — Discussions with the Ministers — Second Speech of the Queen — Third Speech of the Queen — Sir John Norris sent to Holland — Parsimony of Elizabeth — Energy of Davison — Protracted Negotiations — Friendly Sentiments of Count Maurice — Letters from him and Louisa de Coligny — Davison vexed by the Queen's Caprice — Dissatisfaction of Leicester — His vehement Complaints — The Queen's Avarice — Perplexity of Davison — Manifesto of Elizabeth — Sir Philip Sidney — His Arrival at Flushing.

ENGLAND—as we have seen—had carefully watched the negotiations between France and the Netherlands. Although she had—upon the whole, for that intriguing age—been loyal in her bearing towards both parties, she was perhaps not entirely displeased with the result. As her cherished triumvirate was out of the question, it was quite obvious that, now or never, she must come forward to prevent the Provinces from falling back into the hands of Spain. The future was plainly enough foreshadowed, and it was already probable, in case of a prolonged resistance on the part of Holland, that Philip would undertake the reduction of his rebellious subjects by a preliminary conquest of England. It was therefore quite certain that the expense and danger of assisting the Netherlands must devolve upon herself, but, at the same time it was a consolation that her powerful next-door neighbour was not to be made still more powerful by the annexation to his own dominion of those important territories.

Accordingly, so soon as the deputies in France had received their definite and somewhat ignominious repulse from Henry III. and his mother, the English government lost no time in

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intimating to the States that they were not to be left without an ally. Queen Elizabeth was however resolutely averse from assuming that sovereignty which she was not unwilling to see offered for her acceptance; and her accredited envoy at the Hague, besides other more secret agents, were as busily employed in the spring of 1585—as Des Pruneaux had been the previous winter on the part of France—to bring about an application, by solemn embassy, for her assistance.

There was, however, a difference of view, from the outset, between the leading politicians of the Netherlands and the English Queen. The Hollanders were extremely desirous of becoming her subjects; for the United States, although they had already formed themselves into an independent republic, were quite ignorant of their latent powers. The leading personages of the country—those who were soon to become the foremost statesmen of the new commonwealth—were already shrinking from the anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form of government, and were seeking protection for and against the people under a foreign sceptre. On the other hand, they were indisposed to mortgage large and important fortified towns, such as Flushing, Brill, and others, for the repayment of the subsidies which Elizabeth might be induced to advance. They preferred to pay in sovereignty rather than in money. The Queen, on the contrary, preferred money to sovereignty, and was not at all inclined to sacrifice economy to ambition. Intending to drive a hard bargain with the States, whose cause was her own, and whose demands for aid she had secretly prompted, she meant to grant a certain number of soldiers for as brief a period as possible, serving at her expense, and to take for such outlay a most ample security in the shape of cautionary towns.

Too intelligent a politician not to feel the absolute necessity of at last coming into the field to help the Netherlanders to fight her own battle, she was still willing, for a season longer, to wear the mask of coyness and coquetry, which she thought most adapted to irritate the Netherlanders into a full compliance with her wishes. Her advisers in the Provinces were inclined to take the same view. It seemed obvious, after the

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failure in France, that those countries must now become either English or Spanish; yet Elizabeth, knowing the risk of their falling back, from desperation, into the arms of her rival, allowed them to remain for a season on the edge of destruction —which would probably have been her ruin also—in the hope of bringing them to her feet on her own terms. There was something of feminine art in this policy, and it was not without the success which often attends such insincere manœuvres. At the same time, as the statesmen of the republic knew that it was the Queen's affair, when so near a neighbour's roof was blazing, they entertained little doubt of ultimately obtaining her alliance. It was pity—in so grave an emergency —that a little frankness could not have been substituted for a good deal of superfluous diplomacy.

Gilpin, a highly intelligent agent of the English government in Zeeland, kept Sir Francis Walsingham thoroughly informed of the sentiments entertained by the people of that Province towards England. Mixing habitually with the most influential politicians, he was able to render material assistance to the English council in the diplomatic game which had been commenced, and on which a no less important stake than the crown of England was to be hazarded.

"In conference," he said, "with particular persons that bear any rule or credit, I find a great inclination towards her Majesty, joined notwithstanding with a kind of coldness. They allege that matters of such importance are to be maturely and thoroughly pondered, while some of them harp upon the old string, as if her Majesty, for the security of her own estate, was to have the more care of their's here."[1]

He was also very careful to insinuate the expediency of diplomatic coquetry into the mind of a Princess who needed no such prompting. "The less by outward appearance," said he, "this people shall perceive that her Majesty can be contented to take the protection of them upon her, the forwarder they will be to seek and send unto her, and the larger conditions in treaty may be required. For if they see it to come

[1] Gilpin to Walsingham, $\frac{6}{16}$ March, 1585. S. P. Office MS.

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from herself, then do they persuade themselves that it is for the greater security of our own country and her Highness to fear the King of Spain's greatness. But if they become seekers unto her Majesty, and if they may, by outward show, deem that she accounteth not of the said King's might, but able and sufficient to defend her own realms, then verily I think they may be brought to whatsoever points her Majesty may desire."[1]

Certainly it was an age of intrigue, in which nothing seemed worth getting at all unless it could be got by underhand means, and in which it was thought impossible for two parties to a bargain to meet together except as antagonists, who believed that one could not derive a profit from the transaction unless the other had been overreached. This was neither good morality nor sound diplomacy, and the result of such trifling was much loss of time and great disaster. In accordance with this crafty system, the agent expressed the opinion that it would "be good and requisite for the English government somewhat to temporise," and to dally for a season longer, in order to see what measures the States would take to defend themselves, and how much ability and resources they would show for belligerent purposes. If the Queen were too eager, the Provinces would become jealous, "yielding, as it were, their power, and yet keeping the rudder in their own hands."

At the same time Gilpin was favourably impressed with the character both of the country and the nation, soon to be placed in such important relations with England. "This people," he said, "is such as by fair means they will be won to yield and grant any reasonable motion or demand. What these islands of Zeeland are her Majesty and all my lords of her council do know. Yet for their government thus much I must write, that during these troubles it never was better than now. They draw, in a manner, one line, long and carefully in their resolution; but the same once taken and promises made, they would perform them to the uttermost."[2]

Such then was the character of the people, for no man was better enabled to form an opinion on the subject than was

[1] Gilpin to Walsingham, MS. just cited. [2] Ibid.

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Gilpin. Had it not been as well, then, for Englishmen—who were themselves in that age, as in every other, apt to "perform to the uttermost promises once taken and made," and to respect those endowed with the same wholesome characteristic—to strike hands at once in a cause which was so vital to both nations?

So soon as the definite refusal of Henry III. was known in England, Leicester and Walsingham wrote at once to the Netherlands. The Earl already saw shining through the distance a brilliant prize for his own ambition, although he was too haughty, perhaps too magnanimous, but certainly far too crafty, to suffer such sentiments as yet to pierce to the surface. "Mr. Davison," he wrote, "you shall perceive by Mr. Secretary's letters how the French have dealt with these people. They *are well enough served;* but yet I think, if they will heartily and earnestly seek it, the Lord hath appointed them a far better defence. But you must so use the *matter as that they must seek their own good,* although we shall be partakers thereof also. They may now, if they will effectually and liberally deal, bring themselves to a better end than ever France would have brought them."[1]

At that moment there were two diplomatic agents from the States resident in England—Jacques de Gryze, whom Paul Buys had formerly described as having thrust himself head and shoulders into the matter without proper authority, and Joachim Ortel, a most experienced and intelligent man, speaking and writing English like a native, and thoroughly conversant with English habits and character. So soon as the despatches from France arrived, Walsingham, 18th March, 1585, sent for Ortel, and the two held a long conference.[2]

[1] Leicester to Davison, $\frac{8}{18}$ Mar. 1585. S. P. Office MS.

[2] Memorie van Ortel & de Gryze, 24 March, 1585. Hague Archives MS.

It is necessary, once for all, to state that no personage is ever made, in the text, to say or to write anything except what, upon the best evidence of eye and ear witnesses, he is known to have said or written. It is no longer permitted to historians—as was formerly the case, from the times of Livy to those of Cardinal Bentivoglio—to *invent* harangues, letters, and conferences. Where my narrative, for the convenience of the reader, is thrown into a dramatic form, the words—not

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Walsingham.—"We have just received letters from Lord Derby and Sir Edward Stafford, dated the 13th March. They inform us that your deputies—contrary to all expectation and to the great hopes that had been held out to them—have received, last Sunday, their definite answer from the King of France. He tells them, that, considering the present condition of his kingdom, he is unable to undertake the protection of the Netherlands; but says that if they like, and if the Queen of England be willing to second his motion, he is disposed to send a mission of mediation to Spain for the purpose of begging the King to take the condition of the provinces to heart, and bringing about some honourable composition, and so forth, and so forth.

"Moreover the King of France has sent Monsieur de Bellievre to Lord Derby and Mr. Stafford, and Bellievre has made those envoys a long oration. He explained to them all about the original treaty between the States and Monsieur, the King's brother, and what had taken place from that day to this, concluding, after many allegations and divers reasons, that the King could not trouble himself with the provinces at present; but hoped her Majesty would make the best of it, and not be offended with him.

"The ambassadors say further, that they have had an interview with your deputies, who are excessively provoked at this most unexpected answer from the King, and are making loud complaints, being all determined to take themselves off as fast as possible. The ambassadors have recommended that some of the number should come home by the way of England."

Ortel.—"It seems necessary to take active measures at

the substance merely, but the *ipsissima verba*—have been gathered from authentic documents. Letters, speeches, and the like, are often translated into the text from various languages—Latin, French, Flemish, Spanish, Italian, German, and—where the sources are English—the spelling, and, in a very slight measure, the diction, have been put into modern garb. But the reader may be sure that he is never made to be present at imaginary conversations, which, however agreeable and instructive in works intentionally fictitious, are quite out of place in those which claim to be historical.

In this instance the account of the conference is derived from the Report made by Envoy Ortel to the States General, preserved in the Royal Archives at the Hague.

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once, and to leave no duty undone in this matter. It will be advisable to confer, so soon as may be, with some of the principal counsellors of her Majesty, and recommend to them most earnestly the present condition of the provinces. They know the affectionate confidence which the States entertain towards England, and must now, remembering the sentiments of goodwill which they have expressed towards the Netherlands, be willing to employ their efforts with her Majesty in this emergency."

Walsingham (with much show of vexation).—"This conduct on the part of the French court has been most pernicious. Your envoys have been delayed, fed with idle hopes, and then disgracefully sent away, so that the best part of the year has been consumed, and it will be most difficult now, in a great hurry, to get together a sufficient force of horse and foot folk, with other necessaries in abundance. On the contrary, the enemy, *who knew from the first what result was to be expected in France*, has been doing his best to be beforehand with you in the field: add, moreover, that this French negotiation has given other princes a bad taste in their mouths. *This is the case with her Majesty.* The Queen is, not without reason, annoyed that the States have not only despised her friendly and good-hearted offers, but have all along been endeavouring to embark her in this war, for the defence of the Provinces, which would have cost her several millions, without offering to her the slightest security. On the contrary, others, enemies of the religion, who are not to be depended upon—who had never deserved well of the States or assisted them in their need, as she has done—have received this large offer of sovereignty without any reserve whatever."

Ortel (not suffering himself to be disconcerted at this unjust and somewhat insidious attack).—"That which has been transacted with France was not done except with the express approbation and full foreknowledge of her Majesty, so far back as the lifetime of his Excellency (William of Orange), of high and laudable memory. Things had already gone so far, and the Provinces had agreed so entirely together, as to

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make it inexpedient to bring about a separation in policy. It was our duty to hold together, and, once for all, thoroughly to understand what the King of France, after such manifold presentations through Monsieur Des Pruneaulx and others, and in various letters of his own, finally intended to do. At the same time, notwithstanding these negotiations, we had always an especial eye upon her Majesty. We felt a hopeful confidence that she would never desert us, leaving us without aid or counsel, but would consider that these affairs do not concern the Provinces alone or even especially, but are just as deeply important to her and to all other princes of the religion."

After this dialogue, with much more conversation of a similar character, the Secretary and the envoy set themselves frankly and manfully to work. It was agreed between them that every effort should be made with the leading members of the Council to induce the Queen "in this terrible conjuncture, not to forsake the Provinces, but to extend good counsel and prompt assistance to them in their present embarrassments."

There was, however, so much business in Parliament just then, that it was impossible to obtain immediately the desired interviews.

On the 20th, Ortel and De Gryze had another interview with Walsingham at the Palace of Greenwich. The Secretary expressed the warmest and most sincere affection for the Provinces, and advised that one of the two envoys should set forth at once for home in order to declare to the States, without loss of time, her Majesty's good inclination to assume the protection of the land, together with the maintenance of the reformed religion and the ancient privileges. Not that she was seeking her own profit, or wished to obtain that sovereignty which had just been offered to another of the contrary religion, but in order to make manifest her affectionate solicitude to preserve the Protestant faith and to support her old allies and neighbours. Nevertheless, as she could not assume this protectorate without embarking in a dangerous war with the King of Spain, in which she would not only be obliged to spend the blood of her subjects, but also at least two

March 20, 1585.

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millions of gold, there was the more reason that the States should give her certain cities as security. Those cities would be held by certain of her gentlemen, nominated thereto, of quality, credit, and religion, at the head of good, true, and well-paid garrisons, who should make oath never to surrender them to the King of Spain or to any one else without consent of the States. The Provinces were also reciprocally to bind themselves by oath to make no treaty with the King, without the advice and approval of her Majesty. It was likewise thoroughly to be understood that such cautionary towns should be restored to the States so soon as payment should be made of all moneys advanced during the war.

Next day the envoys had an interview with the Earl of Leicester, whom they found as amicably disposed towards their
21st March, 1585. cause as Secretary Walsingham had been. "Her Majesty," said the Earl, "is excessively indignant with the King of France, that he should so long have abused the Provinces, and at last have dismissed their deputies so contemptuously. Nevertheless," he continued, "'tis all your own fault to have placed your hopes so entirely upon him as to entirely forget other princes, and more especially her Majesty. Notwithstanding all that has passed, however, I find her fully determined to maintain the cause of the Provinces. For my own part, I am ready to stake my life, estates, and reputation, upon this issue, and to stand side by side with other gentlemen in persuading her Majesty to do her utmost for the assistance of your country."

He intimated however, as Walsingham had done, that the matter of cautionary towns would prove an indispensable condition, and recommended that one of the two envoys should proceed homeward at once, in order to procure, as speedily as possible, the appointment of an embassy for that purpose to her Majesty. "They must bring full powers," said the Earl, "to give her the necessary guarantees, and make a formal demand for protection; for it would be unbecoming, and against her reputation, to be obliged to present herself, unsought by the other party."

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In conclusion, after many strong expressions of good-will, Leicester promised to meet them next day at court, where he would address the Queen personally on the subject, and see that they spoke with her as well. Meantime he sent one of his principal gentlemen to keep company with the envoys, and make himself useful to them. This personage, being "of good quality and a member of Parliament," gave them much useful information, assuring them that there was a strong feeling in England in favour of the Netherlands, and that the matter had been very vigorously taken up in the national legislature. That assembly had been strongly encouraging her Majesty boldly to assume the protectorate, and had manifested a willingness to assist her with the needful. "And if," said he, "one subsidy should not be enough, she shall have three, four, five, or six, or as much as may be necessary."

The same day, the envoys had an interview with Lord Treasurer Burghley, who held the same language as Walsingham and Leicester had done. "The Queen, to his knowledge," he said, "was quite ready to assume the protectorate; but it was necessary that it should be formally offered, with the necessary guarantees, and that without further loss of time."

On the 22nd March, according to agreement, Ortel and De Gryze went to the court at Greenwich. While waiting there for the Queen, who had ridden out into the country, they had more conversation with Walsingham, whom they found even more energetically disposed in their favour than ever, and who assured them that her Majesty was quite ready to assume the protectorate so soon as offered. "Within a month," he said, "after the signing of a treaty, the troops would be on the spot, under command of such a personage of quality and religion as would be highly satisfactory." While they were talking, the Queen rode into the court-yard, accompanied by the Earl of Leicester and other gentlemen. Very soon afterwards the envoys were summoned to her presence, and allowed to recommend the affairs of the Pro-

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vinces to her consideration. She lamented the situation of their country, and in a few words expressed her inclination to render assistance, provided the States would manifest full confidence in her. They replied by offering to take instant measures to gratify all her demands, so soon as those demands should be made known; and the Queen finding herself surrounded by so many gentlemen and by a crowd of people, appointed them accordingly to come to her private apartments the same afternoon.

At that interview none were present save Walsingham and Lord Chamberlain Howard. The Queen showed herself "extraordinarily resolute" to take up the affairs of the Provinces. "She had always been sure," she said, "that the French negotiation would have no other issue than the one which they had just seen. She was fully aware what a powerful enemy she was about to make—one who could easily create mischief for her in Scotland and Ireland; but she was nevertheless resolved, if the States chose to deal with her frankly and generously, to take them under her protection. She assured the envoys that if a deputation with full powers and reasonable conditions should be immediately sent to her, she would not delay and dally with them, as had been the case in France, but would despatch them back again at the speediest, and would make her good inclination manifest by deeds as well as words. As she was hazarding her treasure together with the blood and repose of her subjects, she was not at liberty to do this except on receipt of proper securities."[1]

Accordingly De Gryze went to the Provinces, provided with complimentary and affectionate letters from the Queen, while Ortel remained in England. So far all was plain and aboveboard; and Walsingham, who, from the first, had been warmly in favour of taking up the Netherland cause, was relieved by being able to write in straightforward language. Stealthy and subtle, where the object was to get within the guard of an enemy who menaced a mortal blow, he was, both by nature

[1] Memorie van de Gryze & Ortel. MS. before cited.

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and policy, disposed to deal frankly with those he called his friends.

"Monsieur de Gryze repaireth presently," he wrote to Davison, "to try if he can induce the States to send their deputies hither, furnished with more ample instructions than they had to treat with the French King, considering that her Majesty carryeth another manner of princely disposition than that sovereign. Meanwhile, for that she doubteth lest in this hard estate of their affairs, and the distrust they have conceived to be relieved from hence, they should from despair throw themselves into the course of Spain, her pleasure therefore is—though by Burnham I sent you directions to put them in comfort of relief, *only as of yourself*—that you shall now, as it were, in her name, if you see cause sufficient, assure some of the aptest instruments that you shall make choice of for that purpose, that her Majesty, rather than that they should perish, will be content to take them under her protection."

He added that it was indispensable for the States, upon their part, to offer "such sufficient cautions and assurances as she might in reason demand."[1]

Matters were so well managed that by the 22nd April the States-General addressed a letter to the Queen, in which they notified her, that the desired deputation was on the point of setting forth. "Recognizing," they said, "that there is no prince or potentate to whom they are more obliged than they are to your Majesty, we are about to request you very humbly to accept the sovereignty of these Provinces, and the people of the same for your very humble vassals and subjects." They added that, as the necessity of the case was great, they hoped the Queen would send, so soon as might be, a force of four or five thousand men for the purpose of relieving the siege of Antwerp.[2]

22 April, 1585.

[1] Walsingham to Davison, $\frac{13}{23}$ March, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

[2] Lettre des Etats Generaux des Provinces Unies à la serenissime Reyne d'Angleterre, 21 April, 1585. Hague Archives, MS.

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A similar letter was despatched by the same courier to the Earl of Leicester.

On the 1st of May, Ortel had audience of the Queen, to deliver the letters from the States-General. He found that

May 1, 1585. despatches, very encouraging and agreeable in their tenor, had also just arrived from Davison. The Queen was in good humour. She took the letter from Ortel, read it attentively, and paused a good while. Then she assured him that her good affection towards the Provinces was not in the least changed, and that she thanked the States for the confidence in her that they were manifesting. "It is unnecessary," said the Queen, "for me to repeat over and over again sentiments which I have so plainly declared. You are to assure the States that they shall never be disappointed in the trust that they have reposed in my good intentions. Let them deal with me sincerely, and without holding open any back-door. Not that I am seeking the sovereignty of the Provinces, for I wish only to maintain their privileges and ancient liberties, and to defend them in this regard against all the world. Let them ripely consider, then, with what fidelity I am espousing their cause, and how, without fear of any one, I am arousing most powerful enemies."[2]

Ortel had afterwards an interview with Leicester, in which the Earl assured him that her Majesty had not in the least changed in her sentiments towards the Provinces. "For myself," said he, "I am ready, if her Majesty choose to make use of me, to go over there in person, and to place life, property, and all the assistance I can gain from my friends, upon the issue. Yea, with so good a heart, that I pray the Lord may be good to me, only so far as I serve faithfully in this cause." He added a warning that the deputies to be appointed should come with absolute powers, in order that her Majesty's bountiful intentions might not be retarded by their own fault.[3]

[1] Lettre des Etats au Cte. de Leicester, 21 April, 1585. Hague Archives, MS.

[2] Brief van Ortel aan de Staten Generaal, 8 Mai, 1585. Hague Archives, MS.

[3] Ibid.

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Ortel then visited Walsingham at his house, Barn-Elms, where he was confined by illness. Sir Francis assured the envoy that he would use every effort, by letter to her Majesty and by verbal instructions to his son-in-law, Sir Philip Sidney, to further the success of the negotiation, and that he deeply regretted his enforced absence from the court on so important an occasion.

Matters were proceeding most favourably, and the all-important point of sending an auxiliary force of Englishmen to the relief of Antwerp—before it should be too late, and in advance of the final conclusion of the treaty between the countries—had been nearly conceded. Just at that moment, however, "as ill-luck would have it," said Ortel, "came a letter from Gilpin. I don't think he meant it in malice, but the effect was most pernicious.[1] He sent the information that a new attack was to be made by the 10th May upon the Kowenstyn, that it was sure to be successful, and that the siege of Antwerp was as good as raised. So Lord Burghley informed me, in presence of Lord Leicester, that her Majesty was determined to await the issue of this enterprise. It was quite too late to get troops in readiness, to co-operate with the States' army, so soon as the 10th May, and as Antwerp was so sure to be relieved, there was no pressing necessity for haste. I uttered most bitter complaints to these lords and to other counsellors of the Queen, that she should thus draw back, on account of a letter from a single individual, without paying sufficient heed to the despatches from the States-General, who certainly knew their own affairs and their own necessities better than any one else could do, but her Majesty sticks firm to her resolution."[2]

Here were immense mistakes committed on all sides. The premature shooting up of those three rockets from the cathedral-tower, on the unlucky 10th May, had thus not only

[1] "Nu zynde in al desen geoccupeert, voert het ongeluck zeker missive van den Secretaris Gilpin, uyt Middelbourg, daertoe, hoewel ick nyet en dencke tzelve uyt eenich malitie by hem geschiet te zyn," &c. (Ibid.)

[2] Ibid.

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ruined the first assault against the Kowenstyn, but also the second and the more promising adventure. Had the four thousand bold Englishmen there enlisted, and who could have reached the Provinces in time to cooperate in that great enterprise, have stood side by side with the Hollanders, the Zeelanders, and the Antwerpers, upon that fatal dyke, it is almost a certainty that Antwerp would have been relieved, and the whole of Flanders and Brabant permanently annexed to the independent commonwealth, which would have thus assumed at once most imposing proportions.

It was a great blunder of Sainte Aldegonde to station in the cathedral, on so important an occasion, watchmen in whose judgment he could not thoroughly rely. It was a blunder in Gilpin, intelligent as he generally showed himself, to write in such sanguine style before the event. But it was the greatest blunder of all for Queen Elizabeth to suspend her cooperation at the very instant when, as the result showed, it was likely to prove most successful. It was a chapter of blunders from first to last, but the most fatal of all the errors was the one thus prompted by the great Queen's most traitorous characteristic, her obstinate parsimony.

And now began a series of sharp chafferings on both sides, not very much to the credit of either party. The kingdom of England, and the rebellious Provinces of Spain, were drawn to each other by an irresistible law of political attraction. Their absorption into each other seemed natural and almost inevitable; and the weight of the strong Protestant organism, had it been thus completed, might have balanced the great Catholic League which was clustering about Spain. It was unfortunate that the two governments of England and the Netherlands should now assume the attitude of traders driving a hard bargain with each other, rather than that of two important commonwealths, upon whose action, at that momentous epoch, the weal and wo of Christendom was hanging. It is quite true that the danger to England was great, but that danger in any event was to be confronted

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Philip was to be defied, and, by assuming the cause of the Provinces to be her own, which it unquestionably was, Elizabeth was taking the diadem from her head—as the King of Sweden well observed—and adventuring it upon the doubtful chance of war.[1] Would it not have been better then—her mind being once made up—promptly to accept all the benefits, as well as all the hazards, of the bold game to which she was of necessity a party? But she could not yet believe in the incredible meanness of Henry III. "I asked her Majesty" (3rd May, 1585), said Ortel, "whether, in view of these vast preparations in France, it did not behove her to be most circumspect and upon her guard. For, in the opinion of many men, everything showed one great scheme already laid down—a general conspiracy throughout Christendom against the reformed religion. She answered me, that thus far she could not perceive this to be the case; nor could she believe,' she said, 'that the King of France could be so faint-hearted as to submit to such injuries from the Guises.'"[2]

Time was very soon to show the nature of that unhappy monarch with regard to injuries, and to prove to Elizabeth the error she had committed in doubting his faint-heartedness. Meanwhile, time was passing, and the Netherlands were shivering in the storm. They needed the open sunshine which her caution kept too long behind the clouds. For it was now enjoined upon Walsingham to manifest a coldness upon the part of the English government towards the States. Davison was to be allowed to return; "but," said Sir Francis, "her Majesty would not have you accompany the commissioners who are coming from the Low Countries, but to come over, either before them or after them, lest it be thought they come over by her Majesty's procurement."[3]

As if they were not coming over by her Majesty's most especial procurement, and as if it would matter to Philip

[1] Camden, 321.

[2] MS. Letter of Ortel, 8 May, 1585, before cited.

[3] Walsingham to Davison, 22 April, 1585, S. P. Office MS.

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—the union once made between England and Holland—whether the invitation to that union came first from the one party or the other!

"I am retired for my health from the court to mine own house," said Walsingham, "but I find those in whose judgment her Majesty reposeth greatest trust so coldly affected unto the cause, as I have no great hope of the matter; and yet, for that the hearts of princes are in the hands of God, who both can will and dispose them at his pleasure, I would be loath to hinder the repair of the commissioners."[1]

Here certainly had the sun gone most suddenly into a cloud. Sir Francis would be loath to advise the commissioners to stay at home, but he obviously thought them coming on as bootless an errand as that which had taken their colleagues so recently into France.

The cause of the trouble was Flushing. Hence the tears, and the coldness, and the scoldings, on the part of the imperious and the economical Queen. Flushing was the patrimony—a large portion of that which was left to him—of Count Maurice. It was deeply mortgaged for the payment of the debts of William the Silent, but his son Maurice, so long as the elder brother Philip William remained a captive in Spain, wrote himself Marquis of Flushing and Kampveer, and derived both revenue and importance from his rights in that important town. The States of Zeeland, while desirous of a political fusion of the two countries, were averse from the prospect of converting, by exception, their commercial capital into an English city, the remainder of the Provinces remaining meanwhile upon their ancient footing. The negociations on the subject caused a most ill-timed delay. The States finding the English government cooling, affected to grow tepid themselves. This was the true mercantile system, perhaps, for managing a transaction most thriftily, but frankness and promptness would have been more statesmanlike at such a juncture.

[1] Walsingham to Davison, MS. just cited.

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"I am sorry to understand," wrote Walsingham, "that the States are not yet grown to a full resolution for the delivering of the town of Flushing into her Majesty's hands. The Queen finding the people of that island so wavering and inconstant, besides that they can hardly, after the so long enjoying a popular liberty, bear a regal authority, would be loath to embark herself into so dangerous a war without some sufficient caution received from them. It is also greatly to be doubted, that if, by practice and corruption, that town might be recovered by the Spaniards, it would put all the rest of the country in peril. I find her Majesty, in case that town may be gotten, fully resolved to receive them into her protection, so as it may also be made probable unto her that the promised three hundred thousand guilders the month will be duly paid."[1]

A day or two after writing this letter, Walsingham sent one afternoon, in a great hurry, for Ortel, and informed him very secretly, that, according to information just received, the deputies from the States were coming without sufficient authority in regard to this very matter. Thus all the good intentions of the English government were likely to be frustrated, and the Provinces to be reduced to direful extremity.

"What can we possibly advise her Majesty to do?" asked Walsingham, "since you are not willing to put confidence in her intentions. You are trying to bring her into a public war, in which she is to risk her treasure and the blood of her subjects against the greatest potentates of the world, and you hesitate meantime at giving her such security as is required for the very defence of the Provinces themselves. The deputies are coming hither to offer the sovereignty to her Majesty, as was recently done in France, or, if that should not prove acceptable, they are to ask assistance in men and money upon a mere *taliter qualiter* guaranty. That's not the way. And there are plenty of ill-disposed persons here to take advantage of this position of affairs to ruin the interest

[1] Minute to Gilpin, $\frac{7}{17}$ May, 1585. S. P. Office MS.

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of the Provinces now placed on so good a footing. Moreover, in this perpetual sending of despatches back and forth, much precious time is consumed; and this is exactly what our enemies most desire."[1]

In accordance with Walsingham's urgent suggestions, Ortel wrote at once to his constituents, imploring them to remedy this matter. "Do not allow," he said, "any more time to be wasted. Let us not painfully build a wall only to knock our own heads against it, to the dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies."[2]

It was at last arranged that an important blank should be left in the articles to be brought by the deputies, upon which vacant place the names of certain cautionary towns, afterwards to be agreed upon, were to be inscribed by common consent. Meantime the English ministers were busy in preparing to receive the commissioners, and to bring the Netherland matter handsomely before the legislature.

The integrity, the caution, the thrift, the hesitation, which characterized Elizabeth's government, were well pourtrayed in the habitual language of the Lord Treasurer, chief minister of a third-rate kingdom now called on to play a first-rate part, thoroughly acquainted with the moral and intellectual power of the nation whose policy he directed, and prophetically conscious of the great destinies which were opening upon her horizon. Lord Burghley could hardly be censured—least of all ridiculed—for the patient and somewhat timid attributes of his nature. The ineffable ponderings, which might now be ludicrous, on the part of a minister of the British Empire, with two hundred millions of subjects and near a hundred millions of revenue, were almost inevitable in a man guiding a realm of four millions of people with half a million of income.

It was, on the whole, a strange negociation, this between England and Holland. A commonwealth had arisen, but was unconscious of the strength which it was to find in the

[1] Brief van Ortel aan de Staaten Generaal, 13 Mai, 1585. Hague Archives MS. [2] Ibid.

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principle of states' union, and of religious equality. It sought, on the contrary, to exchange its federal sovereignty for provincial dependence, and to imitate, to a certain extent, the very intolerance by which it had been driven into revolt. It was not unnatural that the Netherlanders should hate the Roman Catholic religion, in the name of which they had endured such infinite tortures, but it is, nevertheless, painful to observe that they requested Queen Elizabeth, whom they styled defender, not of "the faith" but of the "reformed religion," to exclude from the Provinces, in case she accepted the sovereignty, the exercise of all religious rites except those belonging to the reformed church. They, however, expressly provided against inquisition into conscience.[1] Private houses were to be sacred, the papists free within their own walls, but the churches were to be closed to those of the ancient faith. This was not so bad as to hang, burn, drown, and bury alive nonconformists, as had been done by Philip and the holy inquisition in the name of the church of Rome; nor is it very surprising that the horrible past should have caused that church to be regarded with sentiments of such deep-rooted hostility as to make the Hollanders shudder at the idea of its re-establishment. Yet, no doubt, it was idle for either Holland or England, at that day, to talk of a reconciliation with Rome. A step had separated them, but it was a step from a precipice. No human power could bridge the chasm. The steep contrast between the league and the counter-league, between the systems of Philip and Mucio, and that of Elizabeth and Olden-Barneveld, ran through the whole world of thought, action, and life.

But still the negociation between Holland and England was a strange one. Holland wished to give herself entirely, and England feared to accept. Elizabeth, in place of sovereignty, wanted mortgages; while Holland was afraid

[1] Points et Articles concus et arrestes par les etats generaulx de Pay Bas pour traicter avez la Serenissime Reyne d'Angleterre sur la souveraincté. Hague Archives, MS.

Art. II. "Sans qu'icelle pourra estre changé ou aultre Religion es dicts pays exercée. Pourveu toutefois que personne ne sera recherché en sa conscience."

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to give a part, although offering the whole. There was no great inequality between the two countries. Both were instinctively conscious, perhaps, of standing on the edge of a vast expansion. Both felt that they were about to stretch their wings suddenly for a flight over the whole earth. Yet each was a very inferior power, in comparison with the great empires of the past or those which then existed.

It is difficult, without a strong effort of the imagination, to reduce the English empire to the slender proportions which belonged to her in the days of Elizabeth. That epoch was full of light and life. The constellations which have for centuries been shining in the English firmament were then human creatures walking English earth. The captains, statesmen, corsairs, merchant-adventurers, poets, dramatists, the great Queen herself, the Cecils, Raleigh, Walsingham, Drake, Hawkins, Gilbert, Howard, Willoughby, the Norrises, Essex, Leicester, Sidney, Spenser, Shakspeare and the lesser but brilliant lights which surrounded him; such were the men who lifted England upon an elevation to which she was not yet entitled by her material grandeur. At last she had done with Rome, and her expansion dated from that moment. Holland and England, by the very condition of their existence, were sworn foes to Philip. Elizabeth stood excommunicated of the Pope. There was hardly a month in which intelligence was not sent by English agents out of the Netherlands and France, that assassins, hired by Philip, were making their way to England to attempt the life of the Queen. The Netherlanders were rebels to the Spanish monarch, and they stood, one and all, under death-sentence by Rome. The alliance was inevitable and wholesome. Elizabeth was, however, consistently opposed to the acceptance of a new sovereignty. England was a weak power. Ireland was at her side in a state of chronic rebellion—a stepping-stone for Spain in its already foreshadowed invasion. Scotland was at her back with a strong party of Catholics, stipendiaries of Philip, encouraged by the Guises and periodically inflamed to enthusiasm by the hope of rescuing Mary Stuart from her

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imprisonment, bringing her rival's head to the block, and elevating the long-suffering martyr upon the throne of all the British Islands. And in the midst of England itself, conspiracies were weaving every day. The mortal duel between the two queens was slowly approaching its termination. In the fatal form of Mary was embodied everything most perilous to England's glory and to England's Queen. Mary Stuart meant absolutism at home, subjection to Rome and Spain abroad. The uncle Guises were stipendiaries of Philip, Philip was the slave of the Pope. Mucio had frightened the unlucky Henry III. into submission, and there was no health nor hope in France. For England, Mary Stuart embodied the possible relapse into sloth, dependence, barbarism. For Elizabeth, Mary Stuart embodied sedition, conspiracy, rebellion, battle, murder, and sudden death.

It was not to be wondered at that the Queen thus situated should be cautious, when about throwing down the gauntlet to the greatest powers of the earth. Yet the commissioners from the United States were now on their way to England to propose the throwing of that gauntlet. What now was that England?

Its population was, perhaps, not greater than the numbers which dwell to-day within its capital and immediate suburbs. Its revenue was perhaps equal to the sixtieth part of the annual interest on the present national debt. Single, highly-favoured individuals, not only in England but in other countries cis- and trans-Atlantic, enjoy incomes equal to more than half the amount of Elizabeth's annual budget. London, then containing perhaps one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, was hardly so imposing a town as Antwerp, and was inferior in most material respects to Paris and Lisbon. Forty-two hundred children were born every year within its precincts, and the deaths were nearly as many.[1] In plague years, which were only too frequent, as many as twenty and even thirty thousand people had been annually swept away.[2]

[1] Meteren, xiii. 243. The historian was, for a long period, resident in London at this epoch.

[2] Ibid.

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At the present epoch there are seventeen hundred births every week, and about one thousand deaths.

It is instructive to throw a glance at the character of the English people as it appeared to intelligent foreigners at that day; for the various parts of the world were not then so closely blended, nor did national colours and characteristics flow so liquidly into each other, as is the case in these days of intimate juxta-position.

"The English are a very clever, handsome, and well-made people," says a learned Antwerp historian and merchant, who had resided a long time in London, "but, like all islanders, by nature weak and tender. They are generally fair, particularly the women, who all—even to the peasant women—protect their complexions from the sun with fans and veils, as only the stately gentlewomen do in Germany and the Netherlands. As a people they are stout-hearted, vehement, eager, cruel in war, zealous in attack, little fearing death; not revengeful, but fickle, presumptuous, rash, boastful, deceitful, very suspicious, especially of strangers, whom they despise. They are full of courteous and hypocritical gestures and words, which they consider to imply good manners, civility, and wisdom. They are well spoken, and very hospitable. They feed well, eating much meat, which—owing to the rainy climate and the ranker character of the grass—is not so firm and succulent as the meat of France and the Netherlands. The people are not so laborious as the French and Hollanders, preferring to lead an indolent life, like the Spaniards. The most difficult and ingenious of the handicrafts are in the hands of foreigners, as is the case with the lazy inhabitants of Spain. They feed many sheep, with fine wool, from which, two hundred years ago, they learned to make cloth. They keep many idle servants, and many wild animals for their pleasure, instead of cultivating the soil. They have many ships, but they do not even catch fish enough for their own consumption, but purchase of their neighbours. They dress very elegantly. Their costume is light and costly, but they are very changeable and capricious, altering their fashions

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every year, both the men and the women. When they go away from home, riding or travelling, they always wear their best clothes, contrary to the habit of other nations. The English language is broken Dutch, mixed with French and British terms and words, but with a lighter pronunciation. They do not speak from the chest, like the Germans, but prattle only with the tongue."[1]

Here are few statistical facts, but certainly it is curious to see how many national traits thus photographed by a contemporary, have quite vanished, and have been exchanged for their very opposites. Certainly the last physiological criticism of all would indicate as great a national metamorphosis, during the last three centuries, as is offered by many other of the writer's observations.

"With regard to the women," continues the same authority, "they are entirely in the power of the men, except in matters of life and death, yet they are not kept so closely and strictly as in Spain and elsewhere. They are not locked up, but have free management of their household, like the Netherlanders and their other neighbours. They are gay in their clothing, taking well their ease, leaving house-work to the servant-maids, and are fond of sitting, finely-dressed, before their doors to see the passers-by and to be seen of them. In all banquets and dinner-parties they have the most honour, sitting at the upper end of the board, and being served first. Their time is spent in riding, lounging, card-playing, and making merry with their gossips at child-bearings, christenings, churchings, and buryings; and all this conduct the men wink at, because such are the customs of the land. They much commend however the industry and careful habits of the German and Netherland women, who do the work which in England devolves upon the men. Hence, England is called the paradise of married women, for the unmarried girls are kept much more strictly than upon the continent. The women are handsome, white, dressy, modest; although they go freely about the streets without bonnet, hood, or veil; but

[1] Emanuel van Meteren, 'Nederlandsche Historien,' xiii. 243.

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the noble dames have lately learned to cover their faces with a silken mask or vizard with a plumage of feathers, for they change their fashions every year, to the astonishment of many."[1]

Paul Hentzner, a tourist from Germany at precisely the same epoch, touches with equal minuteness on English characteristics. It may be observed, that, with some discrepancies, there is also much similarity in the views of the two critics.

"The English," says the whimsical Paul, "are serious, like the Germans, lovers of show, liking to be followed, wherever they go, by troops of servants, who wear their master's arms, in silver, fastened to their left sleeves, and are justly ridiculed for wearing tails hanging down their backs. They excel in dancing and music, for they are active and lively, although they are of thicker build than the Germans. They cut their hair close on the forehead, letting it hang down on either side. They are good sailors, and better pirates, cunning, treacherous, thievish. Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London. Hawking is the favourite sport of the nobility. The English are more polite in eating than the French, devouring less bread, but more meat, which they roast in perfection. They put a great deal of sugar in their drink. Their beds are covered with tapestry, even those of farmers. They are powerful in the field, successful against their enemies, impatient of anything like slavery, vastly fond of great ear-filling noises, such as cannon-firing, drum-beating, and bell-ringing; so that it is very common for a number of them, when they have got a cup too much in their heads, to go up to some belfry, and ring the bells for an hour together, for the sake of the amusement. If they see a foreigner very well made or particularly handsome, they will say "'tis pity he is not an Englishman."[2]

It is also somewhat amusing, at the present day, to find a German elaborately explaining to his countrymen the mysteries of tobacco-smoking, as they appeared to his un-

[1] Emanuel van Meteren, just cited.
[2] Paulus Hentznerus, 'Itinerarium Germaniae, Galliae, Angliae, Italiae,' Breslae, 1617.

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sophisticated eyes in England. "At the theatres and everywhere else," says the traveller, "the English are constantly smoking tobacco in the following manner. They have pipes, made on purpose, of clay. At the further end of these is a bowl. Into the bowl they put the herb, and then setting fire to it, they draw the smoke into their mouths, which they puff out again through their nostrils, like funnels,"[1] and so on; conscientious explanations which a German tourist of our own times might think it superfluous to offer to his compatriots.

It is also instructive to read that the light-fingered gentry of the metropolis were nearly as adroit in their calling as they are at present, after three additional centuries of development for their delicate craft; for the learned Tobias Salander, the travelling companion of Paul Hentzner, finding himself at a Lord Mayor's Show, was eased of his purse, containing nine crowns, as skilfully as the feat could have been done by the best pickpocket of the nineteenth century, much to that learned person's discomfiture.[2]

Into such an England and among such English the Netherland envoys had now been despatched on their most important errand.

After twice putting back, through stress of weather, the commissioners, early in July, arrived at London, and were "lodged and very worshipfully appointed at charges of her Majesty in the Clothworkers' Hall in Pynchon-lane, near Tower-street."[3] About the Tower and its faubourgs the buildings were stated to be as elegant as they were in the city itself, although this was hardly very extravagant commendation. From this district a single street led along the river's strand to Westminster, where were the old and new palaces, the famous hall and abbey, the Parliament chambers, and the bridge to Southwark, built of stone, with twenty arches, sixty feet high, and with rows of shops and dwelling-houses on both its sides. Thence, along the broad and beautiful river, were dotted

[1] Paulus Hentznerus, just cited. [2] Ibid.
[3] Stowe's 'Chronicle,' p. 708.

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here and there many stately mansions and villas, residences of bishops and nobles, extending farther and farther west as the city melted rapidly into the country. London itself was a town lying high upon a hill—the hill of Lud—and consisted of a coil of narrow, tortuous, unseemly streets, each with a black, noisome rivulet running through its centre, and with rows of three-storied, leaden-roofed houses, built of timber-work filled in with lime, with many gables, and with the upper stories overhanging and darkening the basements. There were one hundred and twenty-one churches, small and large, the most conspicuous of which was the Cathedral. Old Saint Paul's was not a very magnificent edifice—but it was an extremely large one, for it was seven hundred and twenty feet long, one hundred and thirty broad, and had a massive quadrangular tower, two hundred and sixty feet high. Upon this tower had stood a timber-steeple, rising to a height of five hundred and thirty-four feet from the ground, but it had been struck by lightning in the year 1561, and consumed to the stone-work.[1]

The Queen's favourite residence was Greenwich Palace, the place of her birth, and to this mansion, on the 9th of July, the Netherland envoys were conveyed, in royal barges, from the neighbourhood of Pynchon-lane, for their first audience.

The deputation was a strong one. There was Falck of Zeeland, a man of consummate adroitness, perhaps not of as satisfactory integrity; "a shrewd fellow and a fine," as Lord Leicester soon afterwards characterised him. There was Menin, pensionary of Dort, an eloquent and accomplished orator, and employed on this occasion as chief spokesman of the legation—"a deeper man, and, I think, an honester," said the same personage, adding, with an eye to business, "and he is but poor, which you must consider, but with great secrecy."[2] There was Paul Buys, whom we have met with before; keen, subtle, somewhat loose of life, very passionate, a most energetic and valuable friend to England, a deter-

[1] Meteren, xiii. 243. Camden, 57.

[2] Bruce's 'Leycest. Corresp.' 409, $\frac{4}{14}$ Sept. 1586.

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mined foe to France, who had resigned the important post of Holland's Advocate, when the mission offering sovereignty to Henry III. had been resolved upon, and who had since that period been most influential in procuring the present triumph of the English policy. Through his exertions the Province of Holland had been induced at an early moment to furnish the most ample instructions to the commissioners for the satisfaction of Queen Elizabeth in the great matter of the mortgages. "Judge if this Paul Buys has done his work well," said a French agent in the Netherlands, who, despite the infamous conduct of his government towards the Provinces, was doing his best to frustrate the subsequent negociation with England, "and whether or no he has Holland under his thumb."[1] The same individual had conceived hopes from Falck of Zeeland. That Province, in which lay the great bone of contention between the Queen and the States—the important town of Flushing—was much slower than Holland to agree to the English policy. It is to be feared that Falck was not the most ingenuous and disinterested politician that could be found even in an age not distinguished for frankness or purity; for even while setting forth upon the mission to Elizabeth, he was still clinging, or affecting to cling, to the wretched delusion of French assistance. "I regret infinitely," said Falck to the French agent just mentioned, "that I am employed in this affair, and that it is necessary in our present straits to have recourse to England. There is—so to speak—not a person in our Province that is inclined that way, all recognizing very well that France is much more salutary for us, besides that we all bear her a certain affection. Indeed, if I were assured that the King still felt any goodwill towards us, I would so manage matters that neither the Queen of England, nor any other prince whatever except his most Christian Majesty should take a bite at this country, at least at this Province, and with that view, while waiting for news from France, I will keep things in suspense, and spin them out as long as it is possible to do."[2]

[1] Groen v. Prinsterer, 'Archives,' &c. i. 14. [2] Ibid.

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The news from France happened soon to be very conclusive, and it then became difficult even for Falck to believe—after intelligence received of the accord between Henry III. and the Guises—that his Christian Majesty would be inclined for a bite at the Netherlands. This duplicity on the part of so leading a personage furnishes a key to much of the apparent dilatoriness on the part of the English government. It has been seen that Elizabeth, up to the last moment, could not fairly comprehend the ineffable meanness of the French monarch. She told Ortel that she saw no reason to believe in that great Catholic conspiracy against herself and against all Protestantism which was so soon to be made public by the King's edict of July, promulgated at the very instant of the arrival in England of the Netherland envoys. When that dread fiat had gone forth, the most determined favourer of the French alliance could no longer admit its possibility, and Falck became the more open to that peculiar line of argument which Leicester had suggested with regard to one of the other deputies. "I will do my best," wrote Walsingham, "to procure that Paul Buys and Falck shall receive underhand some reward."[1]

Besides Menin, Falck, and Buys, were Noel de Caron, an experienced diplomatist; the poet-soldier, Van der Does, heroic defender of Leyden; De Gryze, Hersolte, Francis Maalzoon, and three legal Frisians of pith and substance, Feitsma, Aisma, and Jongema;[2] a dozen Dutchmen together—as muscular champions as ever little republic sent forth to wrestle with all comers in the slippery ring of diplomacy. For it was instinctively felt that here were conclusions to be tried with a nation of deep, solid thinkers, who were aware that a great crisis in the world's history had occurred, and would put forth their most substantial men to deal with it. Burghley and Walsingham, the great Queen herself, were no feather-weights like the frivolous Henry III. and his

[1] Walsingham to Davison, $\frac{23\ \text{Oct.}}{2\ \text{Nov.}}$, 1585. S. P. Office MS.
[2] Wagenaar, viii. 90.

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minions. It was pity, however, that the discussions about to ensue presented from the outset rather the aspect of a hard-hitting encounter of antagonists than that of a frank and friendly congress between two great parties whose interests were identical.

Since the death of William the Silent, there was no one individual in the Netherlands to impersonate the great struggle of the Provinces with Spain and Rome, and to concentrate upon his own head a poetical, dramatic, and yet most legitimate interest. The great purpose of the present history must be found in its illustration of the creative power of civil and religious freedom. Here was a little republic, just born into the world, suddenly bereft of its tutelary saint, left to its own resources, yet already instinct with healthy vigorous life, and playing its difficult part among friends and enemies with audacity, self-reliance, and success. To a certain extent its achievements were anonymous, but a great principle manifested itself through a series of noble deeds. Statesmen, soldiers, patriots, came forward on all sides to do the work which was to be done, and those who were brought into closest contact with the commonwealth acknowledged in strongest language the signal ability with which, self-guided, she steered her course. Nevertheless, there was at this moment one Netherlander, the chief of the present mission to England, already the foremost statesman of his country, whose name will not soon be effaced from the record of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That man was John of Olden-Barneveld.

He was now in his thirty-eighth year, having been born at Amersfoot on the 14th of September, 1547.[1] He bore an imposing name, for the Olden-Barnevelds of Gelderland were a race of unquestionable and antique nobility. His enemies, however, questioned his right to the descent which he claimed. They did not dispute that the great grandfather,

[1] Naeranus, 'Historie van het Leven en Sterven van Johans van Olden-Barnevelt, 1648, p. 3. 'Levensbeschrijving Nederslandscher Mannen en Vrouwen,' II. 247.

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Claas van Olden-Barneveld, was of distinguished lineage and allied to many illustrious houses, but they denied that Claas was really the great grandfather of John. John's father, Gerritt, they said, was a nameless outcast, a felon, a murderer, who had escaped the punishment due to his crimes, but had dragged out a miserable existence in the downs, burrowing like a rabbit in the sand. They had also much to say in disparagement of all John's connections. Not only was his father a murderer, but his wife, whom he had married for money, was the child of a most horrible incest, his sisters were prostitutes, his sons and brothers were debauchees and drunkards, and, in short, never had a distinguished man a more uncomfortable and discreditable family-circle than that which surrounded Barneveld, if the report of his enemies was to be believed.[1] Yet it is agreeable to reflect that, with all the venom which they had such power of secreting, these malignant tongues had been unable to destroy the reputation of the man himself. John's character was honourable and upright, his intellectual power not disputed even by those who at a later period hated him the most bitterly. He had been a profound and indefatigable student from his earliest youth. He had read law at Leyden, in France, at Heidelberg. Here, in the head-quarters of German Calvinism, his youthful mind had long pondered the dread themes of foreknowledge, judgment absolute, free will, and predestination. To believe it worth the while of a rational and intelligent Deity to create annually several millions of thinking beings, who were to struggle for a brief period on earth, and to consume in perpetual brimstone afterwards, while others were predestined to endless enjoyment, seemed to him an indifferent exchange for a faith in the purgatory and paradise of Rome. Perplexed in the extreme, the youthful John bethought himself of an inscription over the gateway of his famous but questionable great grandfather's house at Amersfort—*nil scire tutissima fides*.[2] He resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of igno-

[1] 'Gulden Legende van den Nieuwen St. Jan,' 1618. [2] Naeranus, p. 5.

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rance upon matters beyond the flaming walls of the world; to do the work before him manfully and faithfully while he walked the earth, and to trust that a benevolent Creator would devote neither him nor any other man to eternal hell-fire. For this most offensive doctrine he was howled at by the strictly pious, while he earned still deeper opprobrium by daring to advocate religious toleration. In face of the endless horrors inflicted by the Spanish Inquisition upon his native land, he had the hardihood—although a determined Protestant himself—to claim for Roman Catholics the right to exercise their religion in the free States on equal terms with those of the reformed faith. "Any one," said his enemies, "could smell what that meant who had not a wooden nose."[1] In brief, he was a liberal Christian, both in theory and practice, and he nobly confronted in consequence the wrath of bigots on both sides. At a later period the most zealous Calvinists called him Pope John, and the opinions to which he was to owe such appellations had already been formed in his mind.

After completing his very thorough legal studies, he had practised as an advocate in Holland and Zeeland. An early defender of civil and religious freedom, he had been brought at an early day into contact with William the Silent, who recognized his ability. He had borne a snap-hance on his shoulder as a volunteer in the memorable attempt to relieve Haarlem, and was one of the few survivors of that bloody night. He had stood outside the walls of Leyden in company of the Prince of Orange when that magnificent destruction of the dykes had taken place by which the city had been saved from the fate impending over it. At a still more recent period we have seen him landing from the gun-boats upon the Kowenstyn, on the fatal 26th May. These military adventures were, however, but brief and accidental episodes in his career, which was that of a statesman and diplomatist. As pensionary of Rotterdam, he was constantly a member of the General

[1] "Waertoe dit alles soude strecken, konnen sy wel ruycken die geen houte neusen hebben." 'Gulden Legende,' p. 33.

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Assembly, and had already begun to guide the policy of the new commonwealth. His experience was considerable, and he was now in the high noon of his vigour and his usefulness.[1]

He was a man of noble and imposing presence, with thick hair pushed from a broad forehead rising dome-like above a square and massive face; a strong deeply-coloured physiognomy, with shaggy brow, a chill blue eye, not winning but commanding, high cheek bones, a solid, somewhat scornful nose, a firm mouth and chin, enveloped in a copious brown beard; the whole head not unfitly framed in the stiff formal ruff of the period; and the tall stately figure well draped in magisterial robes of velvet and sable—such was John of Olden-Barneveld.

The Commissioners thus described arrived at Greenwich Stairs, and were at once ushered into the palace, a residence which had been much enlarged and decorated by Henry VIII. They were received with stately ceremony. The presence-chamber was hung with Gobelin tapestry, its floor strewn with rushes. Fifty gentlemen pensioners, with gilt battle-axes, and a throng of buffetiers, or beef-eaters, in that quaint old-world garb which has survived so many centuries, were in attendance, while the counsellors of the Queen, in their robes of state, waited around the throne.

There, in close skull-cap and dark flowing gown, was the subtle, monastic-looking Walsingham, with long, grave, melancholy face and Spanish eyes. There too, white staff in hand, was Lord High Treasurer Burghley, then sixty-five years of age, with serene blue eye, large, smooth, pale, scarce-wrinkled face and forehead; seeming, with his placid, symmetrical features, and great velvet bonnet, under which such silver hairs as remained were soberly tucked away, and with his long dark robes which swept the ground, more like a dignified gentlewoman than a statesman, but for the wintry beard which lay like a snow-drift on his ancient breast.

The Queen was then in the fifty-third year of her age, and

[1] Naeranus, 1-14. 'Levensbeschrijving,' &c. II. 246-241.

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considered herself in the full bloom of her beauty. Her garments were of satin and velvet, with fringes of pearl as big as beans. A small gold crown was upon her head, and her red hair, throughout its multiplicity of curls, blazed with diamonds and emeralds. Her forehead was tall, her face long, her complexion fair, her eyes small, dark, and glittering, her nose high and hooked, her lips thin, her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed. As she passed through the ante-chamber to the presence-hall, supplicants presented petitions upon their knees. Wherever she glanced, all prostrated themselves on the ground. The cry of "Long live Queen Elizabeth" was spontaneous and perpetual; the reply, "I thank you, my good people," was constant and cordial. She spoke to various foreigners in their respective languages, being mistress, besides the Latin and Greek, of French, Spanish, Italian, and German. As the Commissioners were presented to her by Lord Buckhurst it was observed that she was perpetually gloving and ungloving, as if to attract attention to her hand, which was esteemed a wonder of beauty. She spoke French with purity and elegance, but with a drawling, somewhat affected accent, saying "*Paar maa foi ; paar le Dieeu vivaant,*" and so forth, in a style which was ridiculed by Parisians, as she sometimes, to her extreme annoyance, discovered.[1]

Joos de Menin, pensionary of Dort, in the name of all the envoys, made an elaborate address. He expressed the gratitude which the States entertained for her past kindness, and particularly for the good offices rendered by Ambassador Davison after the death of the Prince of Orange, and for the deep regret expressed by her Majesty for their disappointment in the hopes they had founded upon France.

"Since the death of the Prince of Orange," he said, "the States have lost many important cities, and now, for the preservation of their existence, they have need of a prince and sovereign lord to defend them against the tyranny and iniqui-

[1] Du Maurier, 'Mémoires,' 257.

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tous oppression of the Spaniards and their adherents, who are more and more determined utterly to destroy their country, and reduce the poor people to a perpetual slavery worse than that of Indians, under the insupportable and detestable yoke of the Spanish Inquisition. We have felt a confidence that your Majesty will not choose to see us perish at the hands of the enemy against whom we have been obliged to sustain this long and cruel war. That war we have undertaken in order to preserve for the poor people their liberty, laws, and franchises, together with the exercise of the true Christian religion, of which your Majesty bears rightfully the title of defender, and against which the enemy and his allies have made so many leagues and devised so many ambushes and stratagems, besides organizing every day so many plots against the life of your Majesty and the safety of your realms—schemes which thus far the good God has averted for the good of Christianity and the maintenance of His churches. For these reasons, Madam, the States have taken a firm resolution to have recourse to your Majesty, seeing that it is an ordinary thing for all oppressed nations to apply in their calamity to neighbouring princes, and especially to such as are endowed with piety, justice, magnanimity, and other kingly virtues. For this reason we have been deputed to offer to your Majesty the sovereignty over these Provinces, under certain good and equitable conditions, having reference chiefly to the maintenance of the reformed religion and of our ancient liberties and customs. And although, in the course of these long and continued wars, the enemy has obtained possession of many cities and strong places within our country, nevertheless the Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland, are, thank God, still entire. And in those lands are many large and stately cities, beautiful and deep rivers, admirable seaports, from which your Majesty and your successors can derive much good fruit and commodity, of which it is scarcely necessary to make a long recital. This point, however, beyond the rest, merits a special consideration, namely, that the conjunction of those Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and

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Friesland, together with the cities of Sluys and Ostend, with the kingdoms of your Majesty, carries with it the absolute empire of the great ocean, and consequently an assurance of perpetual felicity for your subjects. We therefore humbly entreat you to agree to our conditions, to accept the sovereign seignory of these Provinces, and consequently to receive the people of the same as your very humble and obedient subjects, under the perpetual safeguard of your crown—a people certainly as faithful and loving towards their princes and sovereign lords, to speak without boasting, as any in all Christendom.

"So doing, Madam, you will preserve many beautiful churches which it has pleased God to raise up in these lands, now much afflicted and shaken, and you will deliver this country and people—before the iniquitous invasion of the Spaniards, so rich and flourishing by the great commodity of the sea, their ports and rivers, their commerce and manufactures, for all which they have such natural advantages—from ruin and perpetual slavery of body and soul. This will be a truly excellent work, agreeable to God, profitable to Christianity, worthy of immortal praise, and comporting with the heroic virtues of your Majesty, and ensuring the prosperity of your country and people. With this we present to your Majesty our articles and conditions, and pray that the King of Kings may preserve you from all your enemies and ever have you in His holy keeping."[1]

The Queen listened intently and very courteously to the delivery of this address, and then made answer in French to this effect:—"Gentlemen,—Had I a thousand tongues I should not be able to express my obligation to you for the great and handsome offers which you have just made. I firmly believe that this proceeds from the true zeal, devotion, and affection, which you have always borne me, and I am certain that you have ever preferred me to all the princes and potentates in the world. Even when you selected the late Duke of Anjou,

[1] 'Vertoog door de Gedeputeerden by monde van der Heere Menin den ixden July, 1585, voor de Koningin gedaan.' Hague Archives, MS.

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who was so dear to me, and to whose soul I hope that God has been merciful, I know that you would sooner have offered your country to me if I had desired that you should do so. Certainly I esteem it a great thing that you wish to be governed by me, and I feel so much obliged to you in consequence that I will never abandon you, but, on the contrary, assist you till the last sigh of my life. I know very well that your princes have treated you ill, and that the Spaniards are endeavouring to ruin you entirely; but I will come to your aid, and I will consider what I can do, consistently with my honour, in regard to the articles which you have brought me. They shall be examined by the members of my council, and I promise that I will not keep you three or four months, for I know very well that your affairs require haste, and that they will become ruinous if you are not assisted. It is not my custom to procrastinate, and upon this occasion I shall not dally, as others have done, but let you have my answer very soon."[1]

Certainly, if the Provinces needed a king, which they had most unequivocally declared to be the case, they might have wandered the whole earth over, and, had it been possible, searched through the whole range of history, before finding a monarch with a more kingly spirit than the great Queen to whom they had at last had recourse.

Unfortunately, she was resolute in her refusal to accept the offered sovereignty. The first interview terminated with this exchange of addresses, and the deputies departed in their barges for their lodgings in Pynchon-lane.

The next two days were past in perpetual conferences, generally at Lord Burghley's house, between the envoys and the lords of the council, in which the acceptance of the sovereignty was vehemently urged on the part of the Netherlanders, and steadily declined in the name of her Majesty.

"Her Highness," said Burghley, "cannot be induced, by any writing or harangue that you can make, to accept the

[1] Vertoog, &c. MS. before cited. Compare Bor, II. 635, *seq.* Hoofd, Vervoigh, 118.

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principality or proprietorship as sovereign, and it will therefore be labour lost for you to exhibit any writing for the purpose of changing her intention. It will be better to content yourselves with her Majesty's consent to assist you, and to take you under her protection." [1]

Nevertheless, two days afterwards, a writing was exhibited, drawn up by Menin, in which another elaborate effort was made to alter the Queen's determination. This anxiety, on the part of men already the principal personages in a republic, to merge the independent existence of their commonwealth in another and a foreign political organism, proved, at any rate, that they were influenced by patriotic motives alone. It is also instructive to observe the intense language with which the necessity of a central paramount sovereignty for all the Provinces, and the inconveniences of the separate States' right principle were urged by a deputation, *at the head of which stood Olden-Barneveld.* "Although it is not becoming in us," said they, "to enquire into your Majesty's motives for refusing the sovereignty of our country, nevertheless, we cannot help observing that your consent would be most profitable, as well to your Majesty and your successors, as to the Provinces themselves. By your acceptance of the sovereignty the two peoples would be, as it were, united in one body. This would cause a fraternal benevolence between them, and a single reverence, love, and obedience to your Majesty. The two peoples being thus under the government of the same sovereign prince, the intrigues and practices which the enemy could attempt with persons under a separate subjection, would of necessity surcease. Moreover, those Provinces are all distinct duchies, counties, seignories, governed by their own magistrates, laws, and ordinances; each by itself, without any authority or command to be exercised by one Province over another. To this end they have need of a supreme power and of one sovereign prince or seignor, who may command all equally, having a constant regard to the public weal—considered as a generality, and not with regard to the profit of

[1] MS. Report of the Envoys. Comp. Bor, Hoofd, *ubi sup.*

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the one or the other individual Province—and causing promptly and universally to be executed such ordinances as may be made in the matter of war or police, according to various emergencies. Each Province, on the contrary, retaining its sovereignty over its own inhabitants, obedience will not be so promptly and completely rendered to the commands of the lieutenant-general of your Majesty, and many a good enterprise and opportunity will be lost. Where there is not a single authority it is always found that one party endeavours to usurp power over another, or to escape doing his duty so thoroughly as the others. And this has notoriously been the case in the matter of contributions, imposts, and similar matters."[1]

Thus much, and more of similar argument, logically urged, made it sufficiently evident that twenty years of revolt and of hard fighting against one king, had not destroyed in the minds of the leading Netherlanders their conviction of the necessity of kingship. If the new commonwealth was likely to remain a republic, it was, at that moment at any rate, because they could not find a king. Certainly they did their best to annex themselves to England, and to become loyal subjects of England's Elizabeth. But the Queen, besides other objections to the course proposed by the Provinces, thought that she could do a better thing in the way of mortgages. In this, perhaps, there was something of the penny-wise policy, which sprang from one great defect in her character. At any rate much mischief was done by the mercantile spirit which dictated the hard chaffering on both sides the Channel at this important juncture; for during this tedious flint-paring, Antwerp, which might have been saved, was falling into the hands of Philip. It should never be forgotten, however, that the Queen had no standing army, and but a small revenue.

[1] Remonstrantie der Gedeputeerden aan H. M. In the MS. Report before cited. Compare Bor, *ubi sup.*, who, as an historian of the States' right and republican party, seems to have been unwilling to give currency to the strong monarchical and centripetal tendencies, thus expressed by men subsequently the representatives of very different doctrines; and so omits these passages altogether from his abstract of the report.

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The men to be sent from England to the Netherland wars were first to be levied wherever it was possible to find them. In truth, many were pressed in the various wards of London, furnished with red coats and matchlocks at the expense of the citizens, and so despatched, helter-skelter, in small squads as opportunity offered.[1] General Sir John Norris was already superintending these operations, by command of the Queen, before the present formal negotiation with the States had begun.

Subsequently to the 11th July, on which day the second address had been made to Elizabeth, the envoys had many conferences with Leicester, Burghley, Walsingham, and other councillors, without making much progress. There was perpetual wrangling about figures and securities.

"What terms will you pledge for the repayment of the monies to be advanced?" asked Burghley and Walsingham.

"But if her Majesty takes the sovereignty," answered the deputies, "there will be no question of guarantees. The Queen will possess our whole land, and there will be no need of any repayment."

"And we have told you over and over again," said the Lord Treasurer, "that her Majesty will never think of accepting the sovereignty. She will assist you in money and men, and must be repaid to the last farthing when the war is over; and, until that period, must have solid pledges in the shape of a town in each Province."[2]

Then came interrogatories as to the amount of troops and funds to be raised respectively by the Queen and the States for the common cause. The Provinces wished her Majesty to pay one-third of the whole expense, while her Majesty was reluctant to pay one-quarter. The States wished a permanent force to be kept on foot in the Netherlands of thirteen thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry for the field, and twenty-three thousand for garrisons. The councillors thought the last item too much. Then there were queries as to the expense of maintaining a force in the Provinces. The envoys

[1] Stowe, 'Chronicle,' 708-709. [2] MS. Report.

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reckoned one pound sterling, or ten florins, a month for the pay of each foot soldier, including officers; and for the cavalry, three times as much. This seemed reasonable, and the answers to the inquiries touching the expense of the war-vessels and sailors were equally satisfactory. Nevertheless it was difficult to bring the Queen up to the line to which the envoys had been limited by their instructions. Five thousand foot and one thousand horse serving at the Queen's expense till the war should be concluded, over and above the garrisons for such cautionary towns as should be agreed upon; this was considered, by the States, the minimum. The Queen held out for giving only four thousand foot and four hundred horse, and for deducting the garrisons even from this slender force. As guarantee for the expense thus to be incurred, she required that Flushing and Brill should be placed in her hands. Moreover the position of Antwerp complicated the negotiation. Elizabeth, fully sensible of the importance of preserving that great capital, offered four thousand soldiers to serve until that city should be relieved, requiring repayment within three months after the object should have been accomplished. As special guarantee for such repayment she required Sluys and Ostend.[1] This was sharp bargaining, but, at any rate, the envoys knew that the Queen, though cavilling to the ninth-part of a hair, was no trifler, and that she meant to perform whatever she should promise.

There was another exchange of speeches at the Palace of Nonesuch, on the 5th August; and the position of affairs and the respective attitudes of the Queen and envoys were plainly characterized by the language then employed.

After an exordium about the cruelty of the Spanish tyranny and the enormous expense entailed by the war upon the Netherlands, Menin, who, as usual, was the spokesman, alluded to the difficulty which the States at last felt in maintaining themselves.

"Five thousand foot and one thousand horse," he said, "over and above the maintenance of garrisons in the towns

[1] MS. Report.

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to be pledged as security to your Majesty, seemed the very least amount of succour that would be probably obtained from your royal bounty. Considering the great demonstrations of affection and promises of support, made as well by your Majesty's own letters as by the mouth of your ambassador Davison, and by our envoys De Gryse and Ortel, who have all declared publicly that your Majesty would never forsake us, the States sent us their deputies to this country in full confidence that such reasonable demands as we had been authorized to make would be satisfied."

The speaker then proceeded to declare that the offer made by the royal councillors of four thousand foot and four hundred horse, to serve during the war, together with a special force of four thousand for the relief of Antwerp, to be paid for within three months after the siege should be raised, against a concession of the cities of Flushing, Brill, Sluys, and Ostend, did not come within the limitations of the States-General. They therefore begged the Queen to enlarge her offer to the number of five thousand foot and one thousand horse, or at least to allow the envoys to conclude the treaty provisionally, and subject to approval of their constituents.[1]

So soon as Menin had concluded his address, her Majesty instantly replied, with much earnestness and fluency of language.[2]

"Gentlemen," she said, "I will answer you upon the first point, because it touches my honour. You say that I promised you, both by letters and through my agent Davison, and also by my own lips, to assist you and never to abandon you, and that this had moved you to come to me at present. Very well, masters, do you not think I am assisting you when I am sending you four thousand foot and four hundred horse to serve during the war? Certainly, I think yes; and I say frankly that I have never been wanting to my word. No man shall ever say, with truth, that the Queen of England

[1] Discours du S^r Menin au nom des deputés des Provinces unies prononcé devant S. M. à Nonsuch le 5 d'Aout, 1585. (Hague Archives, MS.)

[2] Reponse de la Reine au Discours precedent. (Hague Archives, MS.)

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had at any time and ever so slightly failed in her promises, whether to the mightiest monarch, to republics, to gentlemen, or even to private persons of the humblest condition. Am I, then, in your opinion, forsaking you when I send you English blood, which I love, and which is my own blood, and which I am bound to defend? It seems to me, no. For my part I tell you again that I will never forsake you.

"*Sed de modo?* That is matter for agreement. You are aware, gentlemen, that I have storms to fear from many quarters—from France, Scotland, Ireland, and within my own kingdom. What would be said if I looked only on one side, and if on that side I employed all my resources. No, I will give my subjects no cause for murmuring. I know that my counsellors desire to manage matters with prudence; *sed ætatem habeo*, and you are to believe, that, of my own motion, I have resolved not to extend my offer of assistance, at present, beyond the amount already stated. But I don't say that at another time I may not be able to do more for you. For my intention is never to abandon your cause, always to assist you, and never more to suffer any foreign nation to have dominion over you.

"It is true that you present me with two places in each of your Provinces. I thank you for them infinitely, and certainly it is a great offer. But it will be said instantly, the Queen of England wishes to embrace and devour everything; while, on the contrary, I only wish to render you assistance.[1] I believe, in truth, that if other monarchs should have this offer, they would not allow such an opportunity to escape. I do not let it slip because of fears that I entertain for any prince whatever. For to think that I am not aware—doing what I am doing—that I am embarking in a war against the King of Spain, is a great mistake. I know very well that the succour which I am affording you will offend him as much as if I should do a great deal more. But what care

[1] "——mais on diroit incontinent que la Royne d' Angleterre vouldroit embrasser et gourmander tout, et moy je ne veulx que vous assister et ayder," &c. (Discours de la Royne, &c. MS. *ubi supra*.

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I ?[1] Let him begin, I will answer him. For my part, I say again, that never did fear enter my heart. We must all die once. I know very well that many princes are my enemies, and are seeking my ruin; and that where malice is joined with force, malice often arrives at its ends. But I am not so feeble a princess that I have not the means and the will to defend myself against them all. They are seeking to take my life, but it troubles me not. He who is on high has defended me until this hour, and will keep me still, for in Him do I trust.

"As to the other point, you say that your powers are not extensive enough to allow your acceptance of the offer I make you. Nevertheless, if I am not mistaken, I have remarked in passing—for princes look very close to words—that you would be content if I would give you money in place of men, and that your powers speak only of demanding a certain proportion of infantry and another of cavalry. I believe this would be, as you say, an equivalent, *secundum quod*. But I say this only because you govern yourselves so precisely by the measure of your instructions. Nevertheless I don't wish to contest these points with you. For very often *dum Romæ disputatur Saguntum perit*. Nevertheless, it would be well for you to decide; and, in any event, I do not think it good that you should all take your departure, but that, on the contrary, you should leave some of your number here. Otherwise it would at once be said that all was broken off, and that I had chosen to do nothing for you; and with this the bad would comfort themselves, and the good would be much discouraged.

"Touching the last point of your demand—according to which you desire a personage of quality—I know, gentlemen, that you do not always agree very well among yourselves, and that it would be good for you to have some one to effect such agreement. For this reason I have always intended, so soon as we should have made our treaty, to send a lord of name and authority to reside with you, to assist you in

[1] "——mais il ne m'en chault."

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governing, and to aid, with his advice, in the better direction of your affairs.

"Would to God that Antwerp were relieved! Certainly I should be very glad, and very well content to lose all that I am now expending if that city could be saved. I hope, nevertheless, if it can hold out six weeks longer, that we shall see something good. Already the two thousand men of General Norris have crossed, or are crossing, every day by companies. I will hasten the rest as much as possible; and I assure you, gentlemen, that I will spare no diligence. Nevertheless you may, if you choose, retire with my council, and see if together you can come to some good conclusion."[1]

Thus spoke Elizabeth, like the wise, courageous, and very parsimonious princess that she was. Alas, it was too true, that Saguntum was perishing while the higgling went on at Rome. Had those two thousand under Sir John Norris and the rest of the four thousand but gone a few weeks earlier, how much happier might have been the result!

Nevertheless, it was thought in England that Antwerp would still hold out; and, meantime, a treaty for its relief, in combination with another for permanent assistance to the Provinces, was agreed upon between the envoys and the lords of council. 12th Aug., 1585.

On the 12th August, Menin presented himself at Nonesuch at the head of his colleagues, and, in a formal speech, announced the arrangement which had thus been entered into, subject to the approval of the States.[2] Again Elizabeth, whose "tongue," in the homely phrase of the Netherlanders, "was wonderfully well hung,"[3] replied with energy and ready eloquence.

"You see, gentlemen," she said, "that I have opened the door; that I am embarking once for all with you in a war against the King of Spain. Very well, I am not anxious about the matter. I hope that God will aid us, and that we

[1] Discours de la Royne, &c. (Hague Archives, MS.)
[2] Discours du Sr. Menin. (Hague Archives, MS.)
[3] Hoofd, Vervolgh, 119.

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shall strike a good blow in your cause. Nevertheless, I pray you, with all my heart, and by the affection you bear me, to treat my soldiers well; for they are my own Englishmen, whom I love as I do myself. Certainly it would be a great cruelty, if you should treat them ill, since they are about to hazard their lives so freely in your defence, and I am sure that my request in this regard will be received by you as it deserves.

"In the next place, as you know that I am sending, as commander of these English troops, an honest gentleman, who deserves most highly for his experience in arms, so I am also informed that you have on your side a gentleman of great valour. I pray you, therefore, that good care be taken lest there be misunderstanding between these two, which might prevent them from agreeing well together, when great exploits of war are to be taken in hand. For if that should happen—which God forbid—my succour would be rendered quite useless to you. I name Count Hohenlo, because him alone have I heard mentioned. But I pray you to make the same recommendation to all the colonels and gentlemen in your army; for I should be infinitely sad, if misadventures should arise from such a cause, for your interest and my honour are both at stake.

"In the third place, I beg you, at your return, to make a favourable report of me, and to thank the States, in my behalf, for their great offers, which I esteem so highly as to be unable to express my thanks. Tell them that I shall remember them for ever. I consider it a great honour, that from the commencement, you have ever been so faithful to me, and that with such great constancy you have preferred me to all other princes, and have chosen me for your Queen. And chiefly do I thank the gentlemen of Holland and Zeeland, who, as I have been informed, were the first who so singularly loved me. And so on my own part I will have a special care of them, and will do my best to uphold them by every possible means, as I will do all the rest who have put their trust in me. But I name Holland and Zeeland more especially,

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because they have been so constant and faithful in their efforts to assist the rest in shaking off the yoke of the enemy.

"Finally, gentlemen, I beg you to assure the States that I do not decline the sovereignty of your country from any dread of the King of Spain. For I take God to witness that I fear him not; and I hope, with the blessing of God, to make such demonstrations against him, that men shall say the Queen of England does not fear the Spaniards."[1]

Elizabeth then smote herself upon the breast, and cried, with great energy, "*Illa que virgo viri;* and is it not quite the same to you, even if I do not assume the sovereignty, since I intend to protect you, and since therefore the effects will be the same? It is true that the sovereignty would serve to enhance my grandeur, but I am content to do without it, if you, upon your own part, will only do your duty. For myself, I promise you, in truth, that so long as I live, and even to my last sigh, I will never forsake you. Go home and tell this boldly to the States which sent you hither."[2]

Menin then replied with fresh expressions of thanks and compliments, and requested, in conclusion, that her Majesty would be pleased to send, as soon as possible, a personage of quality to the Netherlands.

"Gentlemen," replied Elizabeth, "I intend to do this, so soon as our treaty shall be ratified, for, in contrary case, the King of Spain, seeing your government continue on its present footing, would do nothing but laugh at us. Certainly I do not mean this year to provide him with so fine a banquet."[3]

[1] Reponce de Sa Majesté. (Hague Archives, MS.) "Car je jure Dieu que je ne le crains pas, et espere avecq l'ayde de Dieu faire telle preuve contre luy, qu'on dira que la Royne d'Angleterre ne craint pas les Espagnols."

[2] Ibid.

"Et frappant sur sa poitrine dict: *Illa que virgo viri.* Ne vous est ce pas tout ung, encoires que je ne prenne pas la souverainete, puisque je vous veulx protecter, et que par la vous aurez les mesmes affectz. Il est vray que la souverainete serviroit a moy pour grandeur. Mais je suis bien contente de ne l' avoir pas, et que seulement vous faictes le debvoir requis de votre part. Car de ma part je vous prometz en verité, que si long temps que vivray, et jusques a mon dernier souspir, que je ne vous deslaisseray pas. Ce que pouvez hardiment asseurer et rapporter à Messrs. les Estatz."

[3] "C'est ce que j'entens aussy de faire aussy tost que serons d'accord.

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The envoys were then dismissed, and soon afterwards a portion of the deputation took their departure from the Netherlands with the proposed treaty. It was however, as we know, quite too late for Saguntum. Two days after the signing of the treaty, the remaining envoys were at the palace of Nonesuch, in conference with the Earl of Leicester, when a gentleman rushed suddenly into the apartment, exclaiming with great manifestations of anger:

"Antwerp has fallen! A treaty has been signed with the Prince of Parma. Aldegonde is the author of it all. He is the culprit, who has betrayed us;" with many more expressions of vehement denunciation.[1]

The Queen was disappointed, but stood firm. She had been slow in taking her resolution, but she was unflinching when her mind was made up. Instead of retreating from her position, now that it became doubly dangerous, she advanced several steps nearer towards her allies. For it was obvious, if more precious time should be lost, that Holland and Zeeland would share the fate of Antwerp. Already the belief, that, with the loss of that city, all had been lost, was spreading both in the Provinces and in England, and Elizabeth felt that the time had indeed come to confront the danger.

Meantime the intrigues of the enemy in the independent Provinces were rife. Blunt Roger Williams wrote in very plain language to Walsingham, a very few days after the capitulation of Antwerp:— 23 Aug.

"If her Majesty means to have Holland and Zeeland," said he, "she must resolve presently. Aldegonde hath pro-

Car certes aultrement le Roy d'Espaigne, voiant la continuation de vostre gouvernement, il ne ferat que rire de nous. Et je ne lui veulx donner pour ceste annee si bon bancquet." (MS. Report, Hague Archives.)

1 "—— is corts daernaar by zyne Exce uyte camer van haere Mat, door eenen edelman den ledeputeerden doen bootschappen vant verlies ende overgaen der stadt van Antwerpen aen den vyand op zeker verdrach ofte tractaet metten Prince van Parma gemaeckt. Daeraff principal autheur ende culpabel werde gehouden den Heere van St. Aldegonde, als de voorn. edelmann opentlyck ende haestich verclaerde, seggende dat de voorn. Aldegonde ons allen verraden hadde," &c. (MS. Report of the Envoys. Hague Archives.)

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mised the enemy to bring them to compound. Here arrived already his ministers which knew all his dealings about Antwerp from first to last. Count Maurice is governed altogether by Villiers, and Villiers was never worse for the English than at this hour. To be short, the people say in general, they will accept a peace, unless her Majesty do sovereign them presently. All the men of war will be at her Highness' devotion, if they be in credit in time. What you do, it must be done presently, for I do assure your honour there is large offers presented unto them by the enemies. If her Majesty deals not roundly and resolutely with them now, it will be too late two months hence."[1]

Her Majesty meant to deal roundly and resolutely. Her troops had already gone in considerable numbers. She wrote encouraging letters with her own hand to the States, imploring them not to falter now, even though the great city had fallen. She had long since promised never to desert them, and she was, if possible, more determined than ever to redeem her pledge. She especially recommended to their consideration General Norris, commander of the forces that had been despatched to the relief of Antwerp.

A most accomplished officer, sprung of a house renowned for its romantic valour, Sir John was the second of the six sons of Lord Norris of Rycot, all soldiers of high reputation, "chickens of Mars," as an old writer expressed himself. "Such a bunch of brethren for eminent achievement," said he, "was never seen. So great their states and stomachs that they often jostled with others."[2] Elizabeth called their mother, "her own crow;"[3] and the darkness of her hair and visage was thought not unbecoming to her martial issue, by whom it had been inherited. Daughter of Lord Williams of Tame, who had been keeper of the Tower in the time of Elizabeth's imprisonment, she had been affectionate and serviceable to the Princess in the hour of her distress, and

[1] Capt. Roger Williams to Walsingham, $\frac{18}{23}$ August, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] "Martis pulli," Fuller's 'Worthies,' ed. 1811, ii. 227-229.

[3] Ibid.

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had been rewarded with her favour in the days of her grandeur. We shall often meet this crow-black Norris, and his younger brother Sir Edward—the most daring soldiers of their time, posters of sea and land—wherever the buffeting was closest, or adventure the wildest on ship-board or shore, for they were men who combined much of the knight-errantry of a vanishing age with the more practical and expansive spirit of adventure that characterized the new epoch.

Nor was he a stranger in the Netherlands. "The gentle-
Letter, 13 Aug. 1585. man to whom we have committed the government of the forces going to the relief of Antwerp," said Elizabeth, "has already given you such proofs of his affection by the good services he has rendered you, that without recommendation on our part, he should stand already recommended. Nevertheless, in respect for his quality, the house from which he is descended, and the valour which he has manifested in your own country, we desire to tell you that we hold him dear, and that he deserves also to be dear to you."[1]

When the fall of Antwerp was certain, the Queen sent Davison, who had been for a brief period in England, back again to his post. "We have learned," she said in the letter which she sent by that envoy, "with very great regret of the surrender of Antwerp. Fearing lest some apprehension should take possession of the people's mind in consequence, and that some dangerous change might ensue, we send you our faithful and well-beloved Davison to represent to you how much we have your affairs at heart, and to say that we are determined to forget nothing that may be necessary to your preservation. Assure yourselves that we shall never fail to accomplish all that he may promise you in our behalf."[2]

Yet, notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, the thorough discussion that had taken place of the whole matter,

[1] Lettre de la Royne aux Etats generaulx, $\frac{13}{23}$ Aug. 1585. (Hague Archives MS.)

[2] Lettre de S. M. contenante credence pour le Sieur Davison, $\frac{25 \text{ Aug.}}{4 \text{ Sept.}}$ 1585. (Hague Archives, MS.)

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and the enormous loss which had resulted from the money-saving insanity upon both sides, even then the busy devil of petty economy was not quite exorcised. Several precious weeks were wasted in renewed chafferings. The Queen was willing that the permanent force should now be raised to five thousand foot and one thousand horse—the additional sixteen hundred men being taken from the Antwerp relieving-force—but she insisted that the garrisons for the cautionary towns should be squeezed out of this general contingent. The States, on the contrary, were determined to screw these garrisons out of her grip, as an additional subsidy. Each party complained with reason of the other's closeness. No doubt the States were shrewd bargainers, but it would have been difficult for the sharpest Hollander that ever sent a cargo of herrings to Cadiz, to force open Elizabeth's beautiful hand when she chose to shut it close. Walsingham and Leicester were alternately driven to despair by the covetousness of the one party or the other.

It was still uncertain what "personage of quality" was to go to the Netherlands in the Queen's name, to help govern the country. Leicester had professed his readiness to risk his life, estates, and reputation, in the cause, and the States particularly desired his appointment. "The name of your Excellency is so very agreeable to this people," said they in a letter to the Earl, "as to give promise of a brief and happy end to this grievous and almost immortal war."[1] The Queen was, or affected to be, still undecided as to the appointment. While waiting week after week for the ratifications of the treaty from Holland, affairs were looking gloomy at home, and her Majesty was growing very uncertain in her temper.

"I see not her Majesty disposed to use the service of the Earl of Leicester," wrote Walsingham. "I suppose the lot of government will light on Lord Gray. I would to God the ability of his purse were answerable to his sufficiency other-

[1] Lettre des etats generaux au Comte de Leicester, afin qu'il pleust a son Exce accepter le commandement de S. M. pour venir pardeça au gouvernement du pays. (Hague Archives MS.)

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wise."[1] This was certainly a most essential deficiency on the part of Lord Gray, and it will soon be seen that the personage of quality to be selected as chief in the arduous and honourable enterprise now on foot, would be obliged to rely quite as much on that same ability of purse as upon the sufficiency of his brain or arm. The Queen did not mean to send her favourite forth to purchase anything but honour in the Netherlands; and it was not the Provinces only that were likely to struggle against her parsimony. Yet that parsimony sprang from a nobler motive than the mere love of pelf. Dangers encompassed her on every side, and while husbanding her own exchequer, she was saving her subjects' resources. "Here we are but book-worms," said Walsingham, "yet from sundry quarters we hear of great practices against this poor crown. The revolt in Scotland is greatly feared, and that out of hand."[2]

Scotland, France, Spain, these were dangerous enemies and neighbours to a maiden Queen, who had a rebellious Ireland to deal with on one side the channel, and Alexander of Parma on the other.

Davison experienced great inconvenience and annoyance before the definite arrangements could be made. There is no doubt that the Spanish party had made great progress since the fall of Antwerp. Roger Williams was right in advising the Queen to deal "roundly and resolutely" with the States, and to "sovereign them presently."

They had need of being sovereigned, for it must be confessed that the self-government which prevailed at that moment was very like no government. The death of Orange, the treachery of Henry III., the triumphs of Parma, disastrous facts, treading rapidly upon each other, had produced a not very unnatural effect. The peace-at-any-price party was struggling hard for the ascendancy, and the Spanish partizans were doing their best to hold up to suspicion the sharp practice of the English Queen. She was even accused of underhand dealing with Spain, to the disadvantage of the Provinces;

[1] Walsingham to Davison, $\frac{5}{15}$ Sept. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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so much had slander, anarchy, and despair, been able to effect. The States were reluctant to sign those articles with Elizabeth which were absolutely necessary to their salvation.

"In how doubtful and uncertain terms I found things at my coming hither," wrote Davison to Burghley, "how thwarted and delayed since for a resolution, and with what conditions, and for what reasons I have been finally drawn to conclude with them as I have done, your Lordship may perceive by that I have written to Mr. Secretary. The chief difficulty has rested upon the point of entertaining the garrisons within the towns of assurance, over and besides the five thousand footmen and one thousand horse."[1]

This, as Davison proceeded to observe, was considered a *sine qua non* by the States, so that, under the perilous circumstances in which both countries were placed, he had felt it his duty to go forward as far as possible to meet their demands. Davison always did his work veraciously, thoroughly, and resolutely; and it was seldom that his advice, in all matters pertaining to Netherland matters, did not prove the very best that could be offered. No man knew better than he the interests and the temper of both countries.

The imperious Elizabeth was not fond of being thwarted, least of all by any thing savouring of the democratic principle, and already there was much friction between the Tudor spirit of absolutism and the rough "mechanical" nature with which it was to ally itself in the Netherlands. The economical Elizabeth was not pleased at being overreached in a bargain; and, at a moment when she thought herself doing a magnanimous act, she was vexed at the cavilling with which her generosity was received. "'Tis a manner of proceeding," said Walsingham, "not to be allowed of, and may very well be termed *mechanical*, considering that her Majesty seeketh no interest in that country—as Monsieur and the French King did—but only their good and benefit, without regard had of the expenses of her treasure and the hazard of her subjects' lives; besides throwing herself into a present war

[1] Davison to Burghley, 24 Sept. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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for their sakes with the greatest prince and potentate in Europe. But seeing the government of those countries resteth in the hands of merchants and advocates—the one regarding profit, the other standing upon vantage of quirks—there is no better fruit to be looked to from them."[1]

Yet it was, after all, no quirk in those merchants and advocates to urge that the Queen was not going to war with the great potentate for their sakes alone. To Elizabeth's honour, she did thoroughly comprehend that the war of the Netherlands was the war of England, of Protestantism, and of European liberty, and that she could no longer, without courting her own destruction, defer taking a part in active military operations. It was no quirk, then, but solid reasoning, for the States to regard the subject in the same light. Holland and England were embarked in one boat, and were to sink or swim together. It was waste of time to wrangle so fiercely over pounds and shillings, but the fault was not to be exclusively imputed to the one side or the other. There were bitter recriminations, particularly on the part of Elizabeth, for it was not safe to touch too closely either the pride or the pocket of that frugal and despotic heroine. "The two thousand pounds promised by the States to Norris upon the muster of the two thousand volunteers," said Walsingham, "were not paid. Her Majesty is not a little offended therewith, seeing how little care they have to yield her satisfaction, which she imputeth to proceed rather from contempt, than from necessity. If it should fall out, however, to be such as by them is pretended, then doth she conceive her bargain to be very ill made, to join her fortune with so weak and broken an estate."[2] Already there were indications that the innocent might be made to suffer for the short-comings of the real culprits; nor would it be the first time, or by any means the last, for Davison to appear in the character of a scape-goat.

"Surely, sir," continued Mr. Secretary, "it is a thing greatly to be feared that the contributions they will yield

[1] Walsingham to Davison, 23 Oct. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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will fall not more true in paper than in payment; which if it should so happen, it would turn some to blame, whereof you among others are to bear your part." [1]

And thus the months of September and of October wore away, and the ratifications of the treaty had not arrived from the Netherlands. Elizabeth became furious, and those of the Netherland deputation who had remained in England were at their wits' end to appease her choler. No news arrived for many weeks. Those were not the days of steam and magnetic telegraphs—inventions by which the nature of man and the aspect of history seem altered—and the Queen had nothing for it but to fret, and the envoys to concert with her ministers expedients to mitigate her spleen. Towards the end of the month, the commissioners chartered a vessel which they despatched for news to Holland. On his way across the sea the captain was hailed on the 28th October by a boat, in which one Hans Wyghans was leisurely proceeding to England with Netherland despatches dated on the 5th of the same month. This was the freshest intelligence that had yet been received.

So soon as the envoys were put in possession of the documents, they obtained an audience of the Queen. This was the last day of October. Elizabeth read her letters, and listened to the apologies made by the deputies for the delay with anything but a benignant countenance. Then, with much vehemence of language, and manifestations of ill-temper, she expressed her displeasure at the dilatoriness of the States. Having sent so many troops, and so many gentlemen of quality, she had considered the whole affair concluded. 31 Oct., 1585.

"I have been unhandsomely treated," she said, "and not as comports with a prince of my quality. My inclination for your support—because you show yourselves unworthy of so great benefits—will be entirely destroyed, unless you deal with me and mine more worthily for the future than you have done in the past. Through my great and especial affec-

[1] Walsingham to Davison, 23 Oct, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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tion for your welfare, I had ordered the Earl of Leicester to proceed to the Netherlands, and conduct your affairs ; a man of such quality as all the world knows, and one whom I love, as if he were my own brother. He was getting himself ready in all diligence, putting himself in many perils through the practices of the enemy, and if I should have reason to believe that he would not be respected there according to his due, I should be indeed offended. He and many others are not going thither to advance their own affairs, to make themselves rich, or because they have not means enough to live magnificently at home. They proceed to the Netherlands from pure affection for your cause. This is the case, too, with many other of my subjects, all dear to me, and of much worth. For I have sent a fine heap of folk thither—in all, with those his Excellency is taking with him, not under ten thousand soldiers of the English nation. This is no small succour, and no little unbaring of this realm of mine, threatened as it is with war from many quarters. Yet I am seeking no sovereignty, nor anything else prejudicial to the freedom of your country. I wish only, in your utmost need, to help you out of this lamentable war, to maintain for you liberty of conscience, and to see that law and justice are preserved."[1]

All this, and more, with great eagerness of expression and gesture, was urged by the Queen, much to the discomfiture of the envoys. In vain they attempted to modify and to explain. Their faltering excuses were swept rapidly away upon the current of royal wrath ; until at last Elizabeth stormed herself into exhaustion and comparative tranquillity. She then dismissed them with an assurance that her good-will towards the States was not diminished, as would be found to be the case, did they not continue to prove themselves unworthy of her favour.[2]

It was not long, however, before the whole matter was arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. It was agreed

[1] Brief der Gedeputeerden in England aan de Staaten General, 1 Nov 1585. (Hague Archives, MS.)

[2] Ibid.

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that a permanent force of five thousand foot and one thousand horse should serve in the Provinces at the Queen's expense; and that the cities of Flushing and Brill should be placed in her Majesty's hands until the entire reimbursement of the debt thus incurred by the States. Elizabeth also—at last overcoming her reluctance—agreed that the force necessary to garrison these towns should form an additional contingent, instead of being deducted from the general auxiliary force.[1]

Count Maurice of Nassau had been confirmed by the States of Holland and Zeeland as permanent stadholder of those provinces. This measure excited some suspicion on the part of Leicester, who, as it was now understood, was the "personage of quality" to be sent to the Netherlands as representative of the Queen's authority. "Touching the election of Count Maurice," said the Earl, "I hope it will be no impairing of the authority heretofore allotted to me, for if it will be, I shall tarry but awhile."[2]

Nothing, however, could be more frank or chivalrously devoted than the language of Maurice to the Queen.

"Madam, if I have ever had occasion," he wrote, "to thank God for his benefits, I confess that it was when, receiving in all humility the letters with which it pleased your Majesty to honour me, I learned that the great disaster of my lord and father's death had not diminished the debonaire affection and favour which it has always pleased your Majesty to manifest to my father's house. It has been likewise grateful to me to learn that your Majesty, surrounded by so many great and important affairs, had been pleased to approve the command which the States-General have conferred upon me. I am indeed grieved that my actions cannot correspond with the ardent desire which I feel to serve your Majesty and these Provinces, for which I hope that my extreme youth will be accepted as an excuse. And although I find myself feeble

[1] Report of the Envoys, MS.; Articles of Treaty, &c. MS. (Hague Archives); Compare Bor, ii. 664; Hoofd, Vervolgh, 123.

[2] Leicester to Davison, Nov. 18, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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enough for the charge thus imposed upon me, yet God will assist my efforts to supply by diligence and sincere intention the defect of the other qualities requisite for my thorough discharge of my duty to the contentment of your Majesty. To fulfil these obligations, which are growing greater day by day, I trust to prove by my actions that I will never spare either my labour or life."[1]

When it was found that the important town of Flushing was required as part of the guaranty to the Queen, Maurice, as hereditary seignor and proprietor of the place—during the captivity of his elder brother in Spain—signified his concurrence in the transfer, together with the most friendly feelings towards the Earl of Leicester, and to Sir Philip Sidney, appointed English governor of the town. He wrote to Davison, whom he called "one of the best and most certain friends that the house of Nassau possessed in England," begging that he would recommend the interests of the family to the Queen, "whose favour could do more than anything else in the world towards maintaining what remained of the dignity of their house."[2] After solemn deliberation with his step-mother, Louisa de Coligny, and the other members of his family, he made a formal announcement of adhesion on the part of the House of Nassau to the arrangements concluded with the English government, and asked the benediction of God upon the treaty. While renouncing, for the moment, any compensation for his consent to the pledging of Flushing —"his patrimonial property, and a place of such great importance"—he expressed a confidence that the long services of his father, as well as those which he himself hoped to render, would meet in time with "condign recognition." He requested the Earl of Leicester to consider the friendship which had existed between himself and the late Prince of Orange, as an hereditary affection to be continued to the children, and he entreated the Earl to do him the honour in

[1] Count Maurice to the Queen, $\frac{10}{20}$ Oct., 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) The letter is in French.

[2] Maurice de Nassau to Davison, 12 Oct. 1585, Brit. Mus., Galba, C. viii. 176 ᵛ MS.; same to same, 25 Oct. 1585, Galba, C. viii. 189 ᵇ, MS.

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future to hold him as a son, and to extend to him counsel and authority; declaring, on his part, that he should ever deem it an honour to be allowed to call him father. And in order still more strongly to confirm his friendship, he begged Sir Philip Sidney to consider him as his brother, and as his companion in arms, promising upon his own part the most faithful friendship. In the name of Louisa de Coligny, and of his whole family, he also particularly recommended to the Queen the interests of the eldest brother of the house, Philip William, "who had been so long and so iniquitously detained captive in Spain," and begged that, in case prisoners of war of high rank should fall into the hands of the English commanders, they might be employed as a means of effecting the liberation of that much-injured Prince. He likewise desired the friendly offices of the Queen to protect the principality of Orange against the possible designs of the French monarch, and intimated that occasions might arise in which the confiscated estates of the family in Burgundy might be recovered through the influence of the Swiss cantons, particularly those of the Grisons and of Berne.

And, in conclusion, in case the Queen should please—as both Count Maurice and the Princess of Orange desired with all their hearts—to assume the sovereignty of these Provinces, she was especially entreated graciously to observe those suggestions regarding the interests of the House of Nassau, which had been made in the articles of the treaty.[1]

Thus the path had been smoothed, mainly through the indefatigable energy of Davison. Yet that envoy was not able to give satisfaction to his imperious and somewhat whimsical mistress, whose zeal seemed to cool in proportion to the readiness with which the obstacles to her wishes were removed. Davison was, with reason, discontented. He had done more than any other man either in England or the Provinces, to bring about a hearty cooperation in the common cause, and to allay mutual heart-burnings and suspicions. He had also,

[1] Louisa de Coligny and Maurice de Nassau to Earl of Leicester, 19 Oct. 1585. (Brit. Mus. Galba, C. viii. 180, MS.)

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owing to the negligence of the English treasurer for the Netherlands, and the niggardliness of Elizabeth, been placed in a position of great financial embarrassment. His situation was very irksome.

"I mused at the sentence you sent me," he wrote, "for I know no cause her Majesty hath to shrink at her charges hitherto. The treasure she hath yet disbursed here is not above five or six thousand pounds, besides that which I have been obliged to take up for the saving of her honour, and necessity of her service, in danger otherwise of some notable disgrace. I will not, for shame, say how I have been left here to myself."[1]

The delay in the formal appointment of Leicester, and, more particularly, of the governors for the cautionary towns, was the cause of great confusion and anarchy in the transitional condition of the country. "The burden I am driven to sustain," said Davison, "doth utterly weary me. If Sir Philip Sidney were here, and if my Lord of Leicester follow not all the sooner, I would use her Majesty's liberty to return home. If her Majesty think me worthy the reputation of a poor, honest, and loyal servant, I have that contents me. For the rest, I wish

'Vivere sine invidia, mollesque inglorius annos
Exigere, amicitias et mihi jungere pares.'"

There was something almost prophetic in the tone which this faithful public servant—to whom, on more than one occasion, such hard measure was to be dealt—habitually adopted in his private letters and conversation. He did his work, but he had not his reward; and he was already weary of place without power, and industry without recognition.

"For mine own particular," he said, "I will say with the poet,

'Crede mihi, bene *qui latuit bene vixit*,
Et intra fortunam debet quisque manere suam.'"[2]

For, notwithstanding the avidity with which Elizabeth had

[1] Davison to ——, 11 Nov. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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sought the cautionary towns, and the fierceness with which she had censured the tardiness of the States, she seemed now half inclined to drop the prize which she had so much coveted, and to imitate the very languor which she had so lately rebuked. "She hath what she desired," said Davison, "and might yet have more, if this content her not. Howsoever you value the places at home, they are esteemed here, by such as know them best, no little increase to her Majesty's honour, surety, and greatness, if she be as careful to keep them as happy in getting them. Of this our cold beginning doth already make me jealous."[1]

Sagacious and resolute Princess as she was, she showed something of feminine caprice upon this grave occasion. Not Davison alone, but her most confidential ministers and favourites at home, were perplexed and provoked by her misplaced political coquetries. But while the alternation of her hot and cold fits drove her most devoted courtiers out of patience, there was one symptom that remained invariable throughout all her paroxysms, the rigidity with which her hand was locked. Walsingham, stealthy enough when an advantage was to be gained by subtlety, was manful and determined in his dealings with his friends; and he had more than once been offended with Elizabeth's want of frankness in these transactions.

"I find you grieved, and not without cause," he wrote to Davison, "in respect to the over thwart proceedings as well there as here. The disorders in those countries would be easily redressed if we could take a thoroughly resolute course here—a matter that men may rather pray for than hope for. It is very doubtful whether the action now in hand will be accompanied by very hard success, unless they of the country there may be drawn to bear the greatest part of the burden of the wars."[2]

And now the great favourite of all had received the appointment which he coveted. The Earl of Leicester was

[1] Davison to ———, 11 Nov. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Minute to Davison, 19 Nov. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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to be Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's forces in the Netherlands, and representative of her authority in those countries, whatever that office might prove to be. The nature of his post was anomalous from the beginning. It was environed with difficulties, not the least irritating of which proceeded from the captious spirit of the Queen. The Earl was to proceed in great pomp to Holland, but the pomp was to be prepared mainly at his own expense. Besides the auxiliary forces that had been shipped during the latter period of the year, Leicester was raising a force of lancers, from four to eight hundred in number; but to pay for that levy he was forced to mortgage his own property, while the Queen not only refused to advance ready money, but declined endorsing his bills.

It must be confessed that the Earl's courtship of Elizabeth was anything at that moment but a gentle dalliance. In those thorny regions of finance were no beds of asphodel or amaranthine bowers. There was no talk but of troopers, saltpetre, and sulphur, of books of assurance, and bills of exchange; and the aspect of Elizabeth, when the budget was under discussion, must effectually have neutralized for the time any very tender sentiment. The sharpness with which she clipped Leicester's authority, when authority was indispensable to his dignity, and the heavy demands upon his resources that were the result of her avarice, were obstacles more than enough to the calm fruition of his triumphs. He had succeeded, in appearance at least, in the great object of his ambition, this appointment to the Netherlands; but the appointment was no sinecure, and least of all a promising pecuniary speculation. Elizabeth had told the envoys, with reason, that she was not sending forth that man —whom she loved as a brother—in order that he might make himself rich. On the contrary, the Earl seemed likely to make himself comparatively poor before he got to the Provinces, while his political power, at the moment, did not seem of more hopeful growth.

Leicester had been determined and consistent in this great

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enterprize from the beginning. He felt intensely the importance of the crisis. He saw that the time had come for swift and uncompromising action, and the impatience with which he bore the fetters imposed upon him may be easily conceived.

"The cause is such," he wrote to Walsingham, "that I had as lief be dead as be in the case I shall be in if this restraint hold for taking the oath there, or if some more authority be not granted than I see her Majesty would I should have. I trust you all will hold hard for this, or else banish me England withal. I have sent you the books to be signed by her Majesty. I beseech you return them with all haste, for I get no money till they be under seal."[1]

But her Majesty would not put them under her seal, much to the favourite's discomfiture.

"Your letter yieldeth but cold answer," he wrote, two days afterwards. "Above all things yet that her Majesty doth stick at, I marvel most at her refusal to sign my book of assurance; for there passeth nothing in the earth against her profit by that act, nor any good to me but to satisfy the creditors, who were more scrupulous than needs. I did complain to her of those who did refuse to lend me money, and she was greatly offended with them. But if her Majesty were to stay this, if I were half seas over, I must of necessity come back again, for I may not go without money. I beseech, if the matter be refused by her, bestow a post on me to Harwich. I lie this night at Sir John Peters', and but for this doubt I had been to-morrow at Harwich. I pray God make you all that be counsellors plain and direct to the furtherance of all good service for her Majesty and the realm; and if it be the will of God to plague us that go, and you that tarry, for our sins, yet let us not be negligent to seek to please the Lord."[2]

The Earl was not negligent at any rate in seeking to please the Queen, but she was singularly hard to please. She had never been so uncertain in her humours as at this

[1] Leicester to Walsingham, 3 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Same to same, 5 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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important crisis. She knew, and had publicly stated as much, that she was "embarking in a war with the greatest potentate in Europe;" yet now that the voyage had fairly commenced, and the waves were rolling around her, she seemed anxious to put back to the shore. For there was even a whisper of peace-negotiations, than which nothing could have been more ill-timed. "I perceive by your message," said Leicester to Walsingham, "that your peace with Spain will go fast on, but this is not the way."[1] Unquestionably it was not the way, and the whisper was, for the moment at least, suppressed. Meanwhile Leicester had reached Harwich, but the post "bestowed on him," contained, as usual, but cold comfort. He was resolved, however, to go manfully forward, and do the work before him, until the enterprise should prove wholly impracticable. It is by the light afforded by the secret never-published correspondence of the period with which we are now occupied, that the true characteristics of Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, and other prominent personages, must be scanned, and the study is most important, for it was by those characteristics, in combination with other human elements embodied in distant parts of Christendom, that the destiny of the world was determined. In that age, more than in our own perhaps, the influence of the individual was widely and intensely felt. Historical chymistry is only rendered possible by a detection of the subtle emanations, which it was supposed would for ever elude analysis, but which survive in those secret, frequently ciphered intercommunications. Philip II., William of Orange, Queen Elizabeth, Alexander Farnese, Robert Dudley, never dreamed—when disclosing their inmost thoughts to their trusted friends at momentous epochs—that the day would come on earth when those secrets would be no longer hid from the patient enquirer after truth. Well for those whose reputations before the judgment-seat of history appear even comparatively pure, after impartial comparison of their motives with their deeds.

"For mine own part, Mr. Secretary," wrote Leicester, "I

[1] Leicester to Walsingham, 3 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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am resolved to do that which shall be fit for a poor man's honour, and honestly to obey her Majesty's commandment. Let the rest fall out to others, it shall not concern me. I mean to assemble myself to the camp, where my authority must wholly lie, and will there do that which in good reason and duty I shall be bound to do. *I am sorry that her Majesty doth deal in this sort, and is content to overthrow so willingly her own cause.* If there can be means to salve this sore, I will. If not,—I tell you what shall become of me, as truly as God lives."[1]

Yet it is remarkable, that, in spite of this dark intimation, the Earl, after all, did not state what was to become of him if the sore was not salved. He was, however, explicit enough as to the causes of his grief, and very vehement in its manifestations. "Another matter which shall concern me deeply," he said, "and all the subjects there, is now by you to be carefully considered, which is—money. I find that the money is already gone, and this now given to the treasurer will do no more than pay to the end of the month. I beseech you look to it, for by the Lord! I will bear no more so miserable burdens; for if I have no money to pay them, let them come home, or what else. I will not starve them, nor stay them. There was never gentleman nor general so sent out as I am; and if neither Queen nor council care to help it, but leave men desperate, as I see men shall be, that inconvenience will follow which I trust in the Lord I shall be free of."[2]

He then used language about himself, singularly resembling the phraseology employed by Elizabeth concerning him, when she was scolding the Netherland commissioners for the dilatoriness and parsimony of the States.

"For mine own part," he said, "I have taken upon me this voyage, not as a desperate nor forlorn man, but as one as well contented with his place and calling at home as any subject was ever. My cause was not, nor is, any other than the Lord's and the Queen's. If the Queen fail, yet must I trust in the Lord, *and on Him, I see, I am wholly to depend.* I

[1] Same to same, 5 Dec., 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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can say no more, but pray to God that her Majesty never send General again as I am sent. And yet I will do what I can for her and my country."[1]

The Earl had raised a choice body of lancers to accompany him to the Netherlands, but the expense of the levy had come mainly upon his own purse. The Queen had advanced five thousand pounds, which was much less than the requisite amount, while for the balance required, as well as for other necessary expenses, she obstinately declined to furnish Leicester with funds, even refusing him, at last, a temporary loan. She violently accused him of cheating her, reclaimed money which he had wrung from her on good security, and when he had repaid the sum, objected to give him a discharge. As for receiving anything by way of salary, that was quite out of the question. At that moment he would have been only too happy to be reimbursed for what he was already out of pocket. Whether Elizabeth loved Leicester as a brother, or better than a brother, may be a historical question, but it is no question at all that she loved money better than she did Leicester. Unhappy the man, whether foe or favourite, who had pecuniary transactions with her Highness.

"I am sorry," said the Earl, "that her Majesty hath so hard a conceit of me, that I should go about to cozen her, as though I had got a fee simple from her, and had it not before, or that I had not had her full release for payment of the money I borrowed. I pray God, any that did put such scruple in her, have not deceived her more than I have done. I thank God I have a clear conscience for deceiving her, and for money matters. I think I may justly say I have been the only cause of more gain to her coffers than all her chequer-men have been. But so is the hap of some, that all they do is nothing, and others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks. But I would this were all the grief I carry with me; but God is my comfort, and on Him I cast all, for there is no surety in this world beside. What hope of help can I have, finding her Majesty so strait with

[1] Same to same, 5 Dec., 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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myself as she is? I did trust that—the cause being hers and this realm's—if I could have gotten no money of her merchants, she would not have refused to have lent money on so easy prized land as mine, to have been gainer and no loser by it. Her Majesty, I see, will make trial of me how I love her, and what will discourage me from her service. But resolved am I that no worldly respect shall draw me back from my faithful discharge of my duty towards her, though she shall show to hate me, as it goeth very near; for I find no love or favour at all. And I pray you to remember that I have not had one penny of her Majesty towards all these charges of mine—not one penny—and, by all truth, I have already laid out above five thousand pounds. Her Majesty appointed eight thousand pounds for the levy, which was after the rate of four hundred horse, and, upon my fidelity, there is shipped, of horse of service, eight hundred, so that there ought eight thousand more to have been paid me. No general that ever went that was not paid to the uttermost of these things before he went, but had cash for his provision, which her Majesty would not allow me—not one groat. Well, let all this go, it is like I shall be the last shall bear this, and some must suffer for the people. Good Mr. Secretary, let her Majesty know this, for I deserve God-a-mercy, at the least."[1]

Leicester, to do him justice, was thoroughly alive to the importance of the crisis. On political principle, at any rate, he was a firm supporter of Protestantism, and even of Puritanism; a form of religion which Elizabeth detested, and in which, with keen instinct, she detected a mutinous element against the divine right of kings. The Earl was quite convinced of the absolute necessity that England should take up the Netherland matter most vigorously, on pain of being herself destroyed. All the most sagacious counsellors of Elizabeth were day by day more and more confirmed in this opinion, and were inclined heartily to support the new Lieutenant-General. As for Leicester himself, while fully

[1] Leicester to Walsingham, 7 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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conscious of his own merits, and of his firm intent to do his duty, he was also grateful to those who were willing to befriend him in his arduous enterprise.

"I have received a letter from my Lord Willoughby," he said, "to my seeming, as wise a letter as I have read a great while, and not unfit for her Majesty's sight. I pray God open her eyes, that they may behold her present estate indeed, *and the wonderful means that God doth offer unto her. If she lose these opportunities, who can look for other but dishonour and destruction?* My Lord Treasurer hath also written me a most hearty and comfortable letter touching this voyage, not only in showing the importance of it, both for her Majesty's own safety and the realm's, *but that the whole state of religion doth depend thereon*, and therefore doth faithfully promise his whole and best assistance for the supply of all wants. I was not a little glad to receive such a letter from him at this time."[1]

And from on board the 'Amity,' ready to set sail, he expressed his thanks to Burghley, at finding him so "earnestly bent for the good supply and maintenance of us poor men sent in her Majesty's service and our country's."[2]

As for Walsingham, earnestly a defender of the Netherland cause from the beginning, he was wearied and disgusted with fighting against the Queen's parsimony and caprice. "He is utterly discouraged," said Leicester to Burghley, "to deal any more in these causes. I pray God your Lordship grow not so too; for then all will to the ground, on my poor side especially."[3]

And to Sir Francis himself, he wrote, even as his vessel was casting off her moorings:—"I am sorry, Mr. Secretary," he said, "to find you so discouraged, and that her Majesty doth deem you so partial. And yet my suits to her Majesty have not of late been so many nor great, while the greatest, I am sure, are for her Majesty's own service. For my part, I will discharge my duty as far as my poor ability and capacity shall serve, and if I shall not have her gracious and princely

[1] Leicester to Walsingham, 7 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Leicester to Burghley, 9 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.) [3] Ibid.

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support and supply, the lack will be to us, for the present, but the shame and dishonour will be hers."[1]

And with these parting words the Earl committed himself to the December seas.

Davison had been meantime doing his best to prepare the way in the Netherlands for the reception of the English administration. What man could do, without money and without authority, he had done. The governors for Flushing and the Brill, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Thomas Cecil, eldest son of Lord Burghley, had been appointed, but had not arrived. Their coming was anxiously looked for, as during the interval the condition of the garrisons was deplorable. The English treasurer—by some unaccountable and unpardonable negligence, for which it is to be feared the Queen was herself to blame—was not upon the spot, and Davison was driven out of his wits to devise expedients to save the soldiers from starving.

"Your Lordship has seen by my former letters," wrote the Ambassador to Burghley from Flushing, "what shift I have been driven to for the relief of this garrison here, 11 Nov. left *à l' abandon ;* without which mean they had all 1585. fallen into wild and shameful disorder, to her Majesty's great disgrace and overthrow of her service. I am compelled, unless I would see the poor men famish, and her Majesty dishonoured, to try my poor credit for them."[2]

General Sir John Norris was in the Betuwe, threatening Nymegen, a town which he found "not so flexible as he had hoped ;"[3] and, as he had but two thousand men, while Alexander Farnese was thought to be marching upon him with ten thousand, his position caused great anxiety. Meantime, his brother, Sir Edward, a hot-headed and somewhat wilful young man, who "thought that all was too little for him," was giving the sober Davison a good deal of trouble.[4] He had got himself into a quarrel, both with that envoy and

[1] Leicester to Walsingham, 9 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Davison to Burghley 11 Nov. 1585. Brit. Mus. (Galba, C. viii. p. 217, MS.)
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

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with Roger Williams, by claiming the right to control military matters in Flushing until the arrival of Sidney. "If Sir Thomas and Sir Philip," said Davison, "do not make choice of more discreet, staid, and expert commanders than those thrust into these places by Mr. Norris, they will do themselves a great deal of worry, and her Majesty a great deal of hurt."[1]

As might naturally be expected, the lamentable condition of the English soldiers, unpaid and starving—according to the report of the Queen's envoy himself—exercised anything but a salutary influence upon the minds of the Netherlanders and perpetually fed the hopes of the Spanish partizans that a composition with Philip and Parma would yet take place. On the other hand, the States had been far more liberal in raising funds than the Queen had shown herself to be, and were somewhat indignant at being perpetually taunted with parsimony by her agents. Davison was offended by the injustice of Norris in this regard. "The complaints which the General hath made of the States to her Majesty," said he, "are without cause, and I think, when your Lordship shall examine it well, you will find it no little sum they have already disbursed unto him for their part. Wherein, nevertheless, if they had been looked into, they were somewhat the more excusable, considering how ill our people at her Majesty's entertainment were satisfied hitherto—a thing that doth much prejudice her reputation, and hurt her service."[2]

At last, however, the die had been cast. The Queen, although rejecting the proposed sovereignty of the Netherlands, had espoused their cause, by solemn treaty of alliance, and thereby had thrown down the gauntlet to Spain. She deemed it necessary, therefore, out of respect for the opinions of mankind, to issue a manifesto of her motives to the world. The document was published, simultaneously in Dutch, French, English, and Italian.[3]

In this solemn state-paper she spoke of the responsibility

1 Davison to Burghley, MS. last cited. 2 Ibid.

3 The Declaration is given in Bor, ii. 667-671.

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of princes to the Almighty, of the ancient friendship between England and the Netherlands, of the cruelty and tyranny of the Spaniards, of their violation of the liberties of the Provinces, of their hanging, beheading, banishing without law and against justice, in the space of a few months, so many of the highest nobles in the land. Although in the beginning of the cruel persecution, the pretext had been the maintenance of the Catholic religion, yet it was affirmed they had not failed to exercise their barbarity upon Catholics also, and even upon ecclesiastics. Of the principal persons put to death, no one, it was asserted, had been more devoted to the ancient church than was the brave Count Egmont, who, for his famous victories in the service of Spain, could never be forgotten in veracious history any more than could be the cruelty of his execution.

The land had been made desolate, continued the Queen, with fire, sword, famine, and murder. These misfortunes had ever been bitterly deplored by friendly nations, and none could more truly regret such sufferings than did the English, the oldest allies, and familiar neighbours of the Provinces, who had been as close to them in the olden time by community of connexion and language, as man and wife. She declared that she had frequently, by amicable embassies, warned her brother of Spain—speaking to him like a good, dear sister and neighbour—that unless he restrained the cruelty of his governors and their soldiers, he was sure to force his Provinces into allegiance to some other power. She expressed the danger in which she should be placed if the Spaniards succeeded in establishing their absolute government in the Netherlands, from which position their attacks upon England would be incessant. She spoke of the enterprise favoured and set on foot by the Pope and by Spain, against the kingdom of Ireland. She alluded to the dismissal of the Spanish envoy, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who had been treated by her with great regard for a long time, but who had been afterwards discovered in league with certain ill-disposed and seditious subjects of hers, and with publicly

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condemned traitors. That envoy had arranged a plot according to which, as appeared by his secret despatches, an invasion of England by a force of men, coming partly from Spain, and partly from the Netherlands, might be successfully managed, and he had even noted down the necessary number of ships and men, with various other details. Some of the conspirators had fled, she observed, and were now consorting with Mendoza, who, after his expulsion from England, had been appointed ambassador in Paris; while some had been arrested, and had confessed the plot. So soon as this envoy had been discovered to be the chief of a rebellion and projected invasion, the Queen had requested him, she said, to leave the kingdom within a reasonable time, as one who was the object of deadly hatred to the English people. She had then sent an agent to Spain, in order to explain the whole transaction. That agent had not been allowed even to deliver despatches to the King.

When the French had sought, at a previous period, to establish their authority in Scotland, even as the Spaniards had attempted to do in the Netherlands, and through the enormous ambition of the House of Guise, to undertake the invasion of her kingdom, she had frustrated their plots, even as she meant to suppress these Spanish conspiracies. She spoke of the Prince of Parma as more disposed by nature to mercy and humanity than preceding governors had been, but as unable to restrain the blood-thirstiness of Spaniards, increased by long indulgence. She avowed, in assuming the protection of the Netherlands, and in sending her troops to those countries, but three objects: peace, founded upon the recognition of religious freedom in the Provinces, restoration of their ancient political liberties, and security for England. Never could there be tranquillity for her own realm until these neighbouring countries were tranquil. These were her ends and aims, despite all that slanderous tongues might invent. The world, she observed, was overflowing with blasphemous libels, calumnies, scandalous pamphlets; for never had the Devil been so busy in supplying evil tongues

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with venom against the professors of the Christian religion.

She added that in a pamphlet, ascribed to the Archbishop of Milan, just published, she had been accused of ingratitude to the King of Spain, and of plots to take the life of Alexander Farnese. In answer to the first charge, she willingly acknowledged her obligations to the King of Spain during the reign of her sister. She pronounced it, however, an absolute falsehood that he had ever saved her life, as if she had ever been condemned to death. She likewise denied earnestly the charge regarding the Prince of Parma. She protested herself incapable of such a crime, besides declaring that he had never given her offence. On the contrary, he was a man whom she had ever honoured for the rare qualities that she had noted in him, and for which he had deservedly acquired a high reputation.[1]

Such, in brief analysis, was the memorable Declaration of Elizabeth in favour of the Netherlands—a document which was a hardly disguised proclamation of war against Philip. In no age of the world could an unequivocal agreement to assist rebellious subjects, with men and money, against their sovereign, be considered otherwise than as a hostile demonstration. The King of Spain so regarded the movement, and forthwith issued a decree, ordering the seizure of all English as well as all Netherland vessels within his ports, together with the arrest of persons, and confiscation of property.

Subsequently to the publication of the Queen's memorial, and before the departure of the Earl of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney having received his appointment, together with the rank of general of cavalry, arrived in the Isle of Walcheren, as governor of Flushing, at the head of a portion of the English contingent.

It is impossible not to contemplate with affection so radiant a figure, shining through the cold mists of that Zeeland winter, and that distant and disastrous epoch. There is hardly a character in history upon which the imagination

[1] Declaration, *ubi sup.*

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can dwell with more unalloyed delight. Not in romantic fiction was there ever created a more attractive incarnation of martial valour, poetic genius, and purity of heart. If the mocking spirit of the soldier of Lepanto could "smile chivalry away," the name alone of his English contemporary is potent enough to conjure it back again, so long as humanity is alive to the nobler impulses.

"I cannot pass him over in silence," says a dusty chronicler, "that glorious star, that lively pattern of virtue, and the lovely joy of all the learned sort. It was God's will that he should be born into the world, even to show unto our age a sample of ancient virtue." The descendant of an ancient Norman race, and allied to many of the proudest nobles in England, Sidney himself was but a commoner, a private individual, a soldier of fortune. He was now in his thirty-second year, and should have been foremost among the statesmen of Elizabeth, had it not been, according to Lord Bacon, a maxim of the Cecils, that "able men should be by design and of purpose suppressed." Whatever of truth there may have been in the bitter remark, it is certainly strange that a man so gifted as Sidney—of whom his father-in-law Walsingham had declared, that "although he had influence in all countries, and a hand upon all affairs, his Philip did far overshoot him with his own bow"[2]—should have passed so much of his life in retirement, or in comparatively insignificant employments. The Queen, as he himself observed, was most apt to interpret everything to his disadvantage. Among those who knew him well, there seems never to have been a dissenting voice. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, lord-deputy of Ireland, and president of Wales, a statesman of accomplishments and experience, called him "*lumen familiæ suæ*," and said of him, with pardonable pride, "that he had the most virtues which he had ever found in any man; that he was the very formular that all well-disposed young gentlemen do form their manners and life by."[3]

[1] Camden's 'Britannia' (1637) p. 329.

[2] Life of Sidney, by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, edited by Sir E. Brydges, p. 23.

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The learned Hubert Languet, companion of Melancthon, tried friend of William the Silent, was his fervent admirer and correspondent. The great Prince of Orange held him in high esteem, and sent word to Queen Elizabeth, that having himself been an actor in the most important affairs of Europe, and acquainted with her foremost men, he could "pledge his credit" that her Majesty had one of the ripest and greatest councillors of state in Sir Philip Sidney that lived in Europe."[2]

The incidents of his brief and brilliant life, up to his arrival upon the fatal soil of the Netherlands, are too well known to need recalling. Adorned with the best culture that, in a learned age, could be obtained in the best seminaries of his native country, where, during childhood and youth, he had been distinguished for a "lovely and familiar gravity beyond his years," he rapidly acquired the admiration of his comrades and the esteem of all his teachers.

Travelling for three years, he made the acquaintance and gained the personal regard of such opposite characters as Charles IX. of France, Henry of Navarre, Don John of Austria, and William of Orange, and perfected his accomplishments by residence and study, alternately, in courts, camps, and learned universities. He was in Paris during the memorable days of August, 1572, and narrowly escaped perishing in the St. Bartholomew Massacre. On his return, he was, for a brief period, the idol of the English court, which, it was said, "was maimed without his company."[3] At the age of twenty-one he was appointed special envoy to Vienna, ostensibly for the purpose of congratulating the Emperor Rudolph upon his accession, but in reality that he might take the opportunity of sounding the secret purposes of the Protestant princes of Germany, in regard to the great contest of the age. In this mission, young as he was, he acquitted himself, not only to the satisfaction, but to the admiration of Walsingham, certainly a master himself in

[1] Sidney Papers, edited by Collins, i. 246. [2] Brooke, p. 16, *seq.*
[3] Fuller's 'Worthies,' i. 499, ed. 1811.

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that occult science, the diplomacy of the sixteenth century. "There hath not been," said he, "any gentleman, I am sure, that hath gone through so honourable a charge with as great commendations as he."[1]

When the memorable marriage-project of Queen Elizabeth with Anjou seemed about to take effect, he denounced the scheme in a most spirited and candid letter, addressed to her Majesty; nor is it recorded that the Queen was offended with his frankness. Indeed we are informed that "although he found a sweet stream of sovereign humours in that well-tempered lady to run against him, yet found he safety in herself against that selfness which appeared to threaten him in her."[2] Whatever this might mean, translated out of euphuism into English, it is certain that his conduct was regarded with small favour by the court-grandees, by whom "worth, duty, and justice, were looked upon with no other eyes than Lamia's."[3]

The difficulty of swimming against that sweet stream of sovereign humours in the well-tempered Elizabeth, was aggravated by his quarrel, at this period, with the magnificent Oxford. A dispute at a tennis-court, where many courtiers and foreigners were looking on, proceeded rapidly from one extremity to another. The Earl commanded Sir Philip to leave the place. Sir Philip responded, that if he were of a mind that he should go, he himself was of a mind that he should remain; adding that if he had entreated, where he had no right to command, he might have done more than "with the scourge of fury." "This answer," says Fulke Greville, in a style worthy of Don Adriano de Armado, "did, like a bellows, blowing up the sparks of excess already kindled, make my lord scornfully call Sir Philip by the name of puppy. In which progress of heat, as the tempest grew more and more vehement within, so did their hearts breathe out their perturbations in a more loud and shrill accent;"[4] and so on; but the impending duel was the next day forbidden by express command of her Majesty. Sidney, not feeling the

[1] Naunton, 'Regalia,' p. 63.
[2] Brooke, p. 51.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Brooke, p. 53.

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full force of the royal homily upon the necessity of great deference from gentlemen to their superiors in rank, in order to protect all orders from the insults of plebeians, soon afterwards retired from the court. To his sylvan seclusion the world owes the pastoral and chivalrous romance of the 'Arcadia,' and to the pompous Earl, in consequence, an emotion of gratitude. Nevertheless, it was in him to do, rather than to write, and humanity seems defrauded, when forced to accept the 'Arcadia,' the 'Defence of Poesy,' and the 'Astrophel and Stella,' in discharge of its claims upon so great and pure a soul.

Notwithstanding this disagreeable affair, and despite the memorable letter against Anjou, Sir Philip suddenly flashes upon us again, as one of the four challengers in a tournament to honour the Duke's presence in England. A vision of him in blue gilded armour—with horses caparisoned in cloth of gold, pearl-embroidered, attended by pages in cloth of silver, Venetian hose, laced hats, and by gentlemen, yeomen, and trumpeters, in yellow velvet cassocks, buskins, and feathers—as one of "the four fostered children of virtuous desire" (to wit, Anjou) storming "the castle of perfect Beauty"[1] (to wit, Queen Elizabeth, ætatis 47) rises out of the cloud-dusts of ancient chronicle for a moment, and then vanishes into air again.

> "Having that day his hand, his horse, his lance,
> Guided so well that they attained the prize
> Both in the judgment of our English eyes,
> But of some sent by that sweet enemy, France,"

as he chivalrously sings, he soon afterwards felt inclined for wider fields of honourable adventure. It was impossible that knight-errant so true should not feel keenest sympathy with an oppressed people struggling against such odds, as the Netherlanders were doing in their contest with Spain. So soon as the treaty with England was arranged, it was his ambition to take part in the dark and dangerous enterprise, and, being son-in-law to Walsingham and nephew to Leicester, he had a

[1] Stowe's Continuation of Holinshed, iv. 436, *seq.*

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right to believe that his talents and character would, on this occasion, be recognised. But, like his "very friend," Lord Willoughby, he was "not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch,"[1] and he failed, as usual, to win his way to the Queen's favour. The governorship of Flushing was denied him, and, stung to the heart by such neglect, he determined to seek his fortune beyond the seas.

"Sir Philip hath taken a very hard resolution," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "to accompany Sir Francis Drake in this voyage, moved thereto for that he saw her Majesty disposed to commit the charge of Flushing unto some other; which he reputed would fall out greatly to his disgrace, to see another preferred before him, both for birth and judgment inferior unto him. The despair thereof and the disgrace that he doubted he should receive have carried him into a different course."[2]

The Queen, however, relenting at last, interfered to frustrate his design. Having thus balked his ambition in the Indian seas, she felt pledged to offer him the employment which he had originally solicited, and she accordingly conferred upon him the governorship of Flushing, with the rank of general of horse, under the Earl of Leicester. In the latter part of November, he cast anchor, in the midst of a violent storm, at Rammekins, and thence came to the city of his government. Young, and looking even younger than his years—"not only of an excellent wit, but extremely beautiful of face"[3]—with delicately chiselled Anglo-Norman features, smooth fair cheek, a faint moustache, blue eyes, and a mass of amber-coloured hair; such was the author of 'Arcadia' and the governor of Flushing.

And thus an Anglo-Norman representative of ancient race had come back to the home of his ancestors. Scholar, poet, knight-errant, finished gentleman, he aptly typified the result of seven centuries of civilization upon the wild Danish pirate. For among those very quicksands of storm-beaten Walachria

[1] Naunton, 'Regalia,' p. 66.
[2] Walsingham to Davison, 13 Sept. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[3] Expression of Aubrey, cited by Gray, Life of Sidney, 61.

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that wondrous Normandy first came into existence whose wings were to sweep over all the high places of Christendom. Out of these creeks, lagunes, and almost inaccessible sand-banks, those bold freebooters sailed forth on their forays against England, France, and other adjacent countries, and here they brought and buried the booty of many a wild adventure. Here, at a later day, Rollo the Dane had that memorable dream of leprosy,[1] the cure of which was the conversion of North Gaul into Normandy, of Pagans into Christians, and the subsequent conquest of every throne in Christendom from Ultima Thule to Byzantium. And now the descendant of those early freebooters had come back to the spot, at a moment when a wider and even more imperial swoop was to be made by their modern representatives. For the sea-kings of the sixteenth century—the Drakes, Hawkinses, Frobishers, Raleighs, Cavendishes—the De Moors, Heemskerks, Barendts—all sprung of the old pirate-lineage, whether called Englanders or Hollanders, and instinct with the same hereditary love of adventure, were about to wrestle with ancient tyrannies, to explore the most inaccessible regions, and to establish new commonwealths in worlds undreamed of by their ancestors—to accomplish, in short, more wondrous feats than had been attempted by the Knuts, and Rollos, Rurics, Rogers, and Tancreds, of an earlier age.

The place which Sidney was appointed to govern was one of great military and commercial importance. Flushing was the key to the navigation of the North Seas, ever since the disastrous storm of a century before, in which a great trading city on the outermost verge of the island had been swallowed bodily by the ocean.[2] The Emperor had so thoroughly recognized its value, as to make special mention of the necessity for its preservation, in his private instructions to Philip, and now the Queen of England had confided it to one who was competent to appreciate and to defend the prize. "How great a jewel this place (Flushing) is to the crown of

[1] Guicciardini, 'Description de tous les Pays Bas,' p. 354.
[2] Guiccardini, *in voce*.

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England," wrote Sidney to his Uncle Leicester, "and to the Queen's safety, I need not now write it to your lordship, who knows it so well. Yet I must needs say, the better I know it, the more I find the preciousness of it."[1]

He did not enter into his government, however, with much pomp and circumstance, but came afoot into Flushing in the midst of winter and foul weather. "Driven to land at Rammekins," said he, "because the wind began to rise in such sort as our mariners durst not enter the town, I came from thence with as dirty a walk as ever poor governor entered his charge withal."[2] But he was cordially welcomed, nor did he arrive by any means too soon.

"I find the people very glad of our coming," he said, "and promise myself as much surety in keeping this town, as popular good-will, gotten by light hopes, and by as slight conceits, may breed; for indeed the garrison is far too weak to command by authority, which is pity. . . . I think, truly, that if my coming had been longer delayed, some alteration would have followed; for the truth is, this people is weary of war, and if they do not see such a course taken as may be likely to defend them, they will in a sudden give over the cause. . . . All will be lost if government be not presently used."[3]

He expressed much anxiety for the arrival of his uncle, with which sentiments he assured the Earl that the Netherlanders fully sympathized. "Your Lordship's coming," he said, "is as much longed for as Messias is of the Jews. It is indeed most necessary that your Lordship make great speed to reform both the Dutch and English abuses."[4]

[1] Sir P. Sidney to Earl of Leicester, 22 Nov. 1585. Brit. Mus. Galba, C. viii. p. 213, MS. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

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CHAPTER VII.

The Earl of Leicester — His Triumphal Entrance into Holland — English Spies about him — Importance of Holland to England — Spanish Schemes for invading England — Letter of the Grand Commander — Perilous Position of England — True Nature of the Contest — Wealth and Strength of the Provinces — Power of the Dutch and English People — Affection of the Hollanders for the Queen — Secret Purposes of Leicester — Wretched Condition of English Troops — The Nassaus and Hohenlo — The Earl's Opinion of them — Clerk and Killigrew — Interview with the States — Government General offered to the Earl — Discussions on the Subject — The Earl accepts the Office — His Ambition and Mistakes — His Installation at the Hague — Intimations of the Queen's Displeasure — Deprecatory Letters of Leicester — Davison's Mission to England — Queen's Anger and Jealousy — Her angry Letters to the Earl and the States — Arrival of Davison — Stormy Interview with the Queen — The second one is calmer — Queen's Wrath somewhat mitigated — Mission of Heneage to the States — Shirley sent to England by the Earl — His Interview with Elizabeth — Leicester's Letters to his Friends — Paltry Conduct of the Earl to Davison — He excuses himself at Davison's Expense — His Letter to Burghley — Effect of the Queen's Letters to the States — Suspicion and Discontent in Holland — States excuse their Conduct to the Queen — Leicester discredited in Holland — Evil Consequences to Holland and England — Magic Effect of a Letter from Leicester — The Queen appeased — Her Letters to the States and the Earl — She permits the granted Authority — Unhappy Results of the Queen's Course — Her variable Moods — She attempts to deceive Walsingham — Her Injustice to Heneage — His Perplexity and Distress — Humiliating Position of Leicester — His melancholy Letters to the Queen — He receives a little Consolation — And writes more cheerfully — The Queen is more benignant — The States less contented than the Earl — His Quarrels with them begin.

At last the Earl of Leicester came. Embarking at Harwich, with a fleet of fifty ships, and attended "by the flower and chief gallants of England"[1]—the Lords Sheffield, Willoughby, North, Burroughs, Sir Gervase Clifton, Sir William Russell, Sir Robert Sidney, and others among the number—the new lieutenant-general of the English forces in the Netherlands arrived on the 19th December, 1585, at Flushing. His nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, and Count Maurice of Nassau, with a body of troops and a great procession of

Dec. 9, 19, 1585.

[1] Stowe, 711.

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civil functionaries, were in readiness to receive him, and to escort him to the lodgings prepared for him.[1]

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was then fifty-four years of age. There are few personages in English history whose adventures, real or fictitious, have been made more familiar to the world than his have been, or whose individuality has been presented in more picturesque fashion, by chronicle, tragedy, or romance. Born in the same day of the month and hour of the day with the Queen, but two years before her birth, the supposed synastry of their destinies[2] might partly account, in that age of astrological superstition, for the influence which he perpetually exerted. They had, moreover, been fellow-prisoners together, in the commencement of the reign of Mary, and it is possible that he may have been the medium through which the indulgent expressions of Philip II. were conveyed to the Princess Elizabeth.

His grandfather, John Dudley, that "caterpillar of the commonwealth," who lost his head in the first year of Henry VIII. as a reward for the "grist which he brought to the mill[3] of Henry VII.; his father, the mighty Duke of Northumberland, who rose out of the wreck of an obscure and ruined family to almost regal power, only to perish, like his predecessor, upon the scaffold, had bequeathed him nothing save rapacity, ambition, and the genius to succeed. But Elizabeth seemed to ascend the throne only to bestow gifts upon her favourite. Baronies and earldoms, stars and garters, manors and monopolies, castles and forests, church livings and college chancellorships, advowsons and sinecures, emoluments and dignities, the most copious and the most exalted, were conferred upon him in breathless succession. Wine, oil, currants, velvets, ecclesiastical benefices, university headships, licences to preach, to teach, to ride, to sail, to pick and to steal, all brought "grist to his mill." His grandfather, "the horse leach and shearer," never filled his coffers more rapidly than did Lord Robert, the fortunate courtier. Of his

[1] Bor, ii. 684, 685; Hoofd, Vervolgh, 133, 134; Wagenaar, viii. 112, *seq.*; Stowe, 711; Strada, ii. 408, 409.

[2] Naunton, 34, and *note*.

[3] Expression of Lord Bacon.

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early wedlock with the ill-starred Amy Robsart, of his nuptial projects with the Queen, of his subsequent marriages and mock-marriages with Douglas Sheffield and Lettice of Essex, of his plottings, poisonings, imaginary or otherwise, of his countless intrigues, amatory and political—of that luxuriant, creeping, flaunting, all-pervading existence which struck its fibres into the mould, and coiled itself through the whole fabric, of Elizabeth's life and reign—of all this the world has long known too much to render a repetition needful here. The inmost nature and the secret deeds of a man placed so high by wealth and station, can be seen but darkly through the glass of contemporary record. There was no tribunal to sit upon his guilt. A grandee could be judged only when no longer a favourite, and the infatuation of Elizabeth for Leicester terminated only with his life. He stood now upon the soil of the Netherlands in the character of a "Messiah," yet he had been charged with crimes sufficient to send twenty humbler malefactors to the gibbet. "I think," said a most malignant arraigner of the man, in a published pamphlet, "that the Earl of Leicester hath more blood lying upon his head at this day, crying for vengeance, than ever had private man before, were he never so wicked."[1]

Certainly the mass of misdemeanours and infamies hurled at the head of the favourite by that "green-coated Jesuit," father Parsons, under the title of 'Leycester's Commonwealth,' were never accepted as literal verities; yet the value of the precept, to calumniate boldly, with the certainty that much of the calumny would last for ever, was never better illustrated than in the case of Robert Dudley. Besides the lesser delinquencies of filling his purse by the sale of honours and dignities, by violent ejectments from land, fraudulent titles, rapacious enclosures of commons, by taking bribes for matters of justice, grace, and supplication to the royal authority, he was accused of forging various letters to the Queen, often to ruin his political adversaries, and of

[1] 'Leycester's Commonwealth: conceived, spoken, and published with most earnest protestation of all dutiful good-will and affection towards the realm, for whose good only it is made common to many (by Robt. Parsons),' 4to. London. 1641.

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plottings to entrap them into conspiracies, playing first the comrade and then the informer. The list of his murders and attempts to murder was almost endless. "His lordship hath a special fortune," saith the Jesuit, "that when he desireth any woman's favour, whatsoever person standeth in his way hath the luck to die quickly."[1] He was said to have poisoned Alice Drayton, Lady Lennox, Lord Sussex, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, Lord Sheffield, whose widow he married and then poisoned, Lord Essex, whose widow he also married, and intended to poison, but who was said to have subsequently poisoned him—besides murders or schemes for murder of various other individuals, both French and English.[2] "He was a rare artist in poison," said Sir Robert Naunton,[3] and certainly not Cæsar Borgia, nor his father or sister, was more accomplished in that difficult profession than was Dudley, if half the charges against him could be believed. Fortunately for his fame, many of them were proved to be false. Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy of Ireland, at the time of the death of Lord Essex, having caused a diligent inquiry to be made into that dark affair, wrote to the council that it was usual for the Earl to fall into a bloody flux when disturbed in his mind, and that his body when opened showed no signs of poison.[4] It is true that Sir Henry, although an honourable man, was Leicester's brother-in-law, and that perhaps an autopsy was not conducted at that day in Ireland on very scientific principles.

His participation in the strange death of his first wife was a matter of current belief among his contemporaries. "He is infamed by the death of his wife," said Burghley,[5] and the tale has since become so interwoven with classic and legendary fiction, as well as with more authentic history, that the phantom of the murdered Amy Robsart is sure to arise at every mention of the Earl's name. Yet a coroner's inquest—as appears from his own secret correspondence with his relative and agent at Cumnor—was immediately and persistently demanded by Dudley. A jury was impannelled—every man

[1] Leycester's 'Common wealth,' *ut sup.* [2] Ibid. [3] Naunton, 'Regalia,' 43, 44.
[4] Sydney Papers, by Collins, i. 48. [5] Lodge, ii. 202.

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of them a stranger to him, and some of them enemies. Antony Forster, Appleyard, and Arthur Robsart, brother-in-law and brother of the lady, were present, according to Dudley's special request; "and if more of her friends could have been sent," said he, "I would have sent them;" but with all their minuteness of inquiry, "they could find," wrote Blount, "no presumptions of evil," although he expressed a suspicion that "some of the jurymen were sorry that they could not." That the unfortunate lady was killed by a fall down stairs was all that could be made of it by a coroner's inquest, rather hostile than otherwise, and urged to rigorous investigation by the supposed culprit himself.[1] Nevertheless, the calumny has endured for three centuries, and is likely to survive as many more.

Whatever crimes Dudley may have committed in the course of his career, there is no doubt whatever that he was the most abused man in Europe. He had been deeply wounded by the Jesuit's artful publication, in which all the misdeeds with which he was falsely or justly charged were drawn up in awful array, in a form half colloquial, half judicial. "You had better give some contentment to my Lord Leicester," wrote the French envoy from London to his government, "on account of the bitter feelings excited in him by these villainous books lately written against him."[2]

The Earl himself ascribed these calumnies to the Jesuits, to the Guise faction, and particularly to the Queen of Scots. He was said, in consequence, to have vowed an eternal hatred to that most unfortunate and most intriguing Princess. "Leicester has lately told a friend," wrote Charles Paget, "that he will persecute you to the uttermost, for that he supposeth your Majesty to be privy to the setting forth of the book against him."[3] Nevertheless, calumniated or innocent,

[1] Abstract of the Correspondence preserved in the Pepysian Library at Cambridge, between Lord Robert Dudley and Thomas Blount, an agent of his at Cumnor, during the inquest held on Amy Robsart, published in Craik, 'Romance of the Peerage.'

[2] —— "il sera bon de donner quelque contentement au dict sieur Conte de Lestre pour ce qu'il a sy affection de ces vilains livres fetz contre luy," &c. ('Castlenau-Mauvissiere à M. de Brulart,' Brienne, MS.)

[3] Charles Paget to Queen of Scots, 14 Jan. 1585, in Murdin, ii. 437.

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he was at least triumphant over calumny. Nothing could shake his hold upon Elizabeth's affections. The Queen scorned but resented the malignant attacks upon the reputation of her favourite. She declared "before God and in her conscience, that she knew the libels against him to be most scandalous, and such as none but an incarnate devil himself could dream to be true." His power, founded not upon genius nor virtue, but upon woman's caprice, shone serenely above the gulf where there had been so many shipwrecks. "I am now passing into another world," said Sussex, upon his death-bed, to his friends, "and I must leave you to your fortunes; but beware of the gipsy, or he will be too hard for you. You know not the beast so well as I do."[1]

The "gipsy," as he had been called from his dark complexion, had been renowned in youth for the beauty of his person, being "tall and singularly well-featured, of a sweet aspect, but high foreheaded, which was of no discommendation," according to Naunton. The Queen, who had the passion of her father for tall and proper men, was easier won by externals, from her youth even to the days of her dotage, than befitted so very sagacious a personage. Chamberlains, squires of the body, carvers, cup-bearers, gentlemen-ushers, porters, could obtain neither place nor favour at court, unless distinguished for stature, strength, or extraordinary activity. To lose a tooth had been known to cause the loss of a place, and the excellent constitution of leg which helped Sir Christopher Hatton into the chancellorship, was not more remarkable perhaps than the success of similar endowments in other contemporaries. Leicester, although stately and imposing, had passed his summer solstice. A big bulky man, with a long red face, a bald head, a defiant somewhat sinister eye, a high nose, and a little torrent of foam-white curly beard, he was still magnificent in costume. Rustling in satin and feathers, with jewels in his ears, and his velvet toque stuck as airily as ever upon the side of his head, he amazed the honest Hollanders, who had been used to less gorgeous chieftains.

[1] Naunton, p. 49.

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"Every body is wondering at the great magnificence and splendour of his clothes,"[1] said the plain chronicler of Utrecht. For, not much more than a year before, Fulke Greville had met at Delft a man whose external adornments were simpler; a somewhat slip-shod personage, whom he thus pourtrayed:— "His uppermost garment was a gown," said the euphuistic Fulke, "yet such as, I confidently affirm, a mean-born student of our Inns of Court would not have been well disposed to walk the streets in. Unbuttoned his doublet was, and of like precious matter and form to the other. His waistcoat, which showed itself under it, not unlike the best sort of those woollen knit ones which our ordinary barge-watermen row us in. His company about him, the burgesses of that beer-brewing town. *No external sign of degree could have discovered the inequality of his worth or estate from that multitude.* Nevertheless, upon conversing with him, there *was an outward passage of inward greatness.*"[2]

Of a certainty there must have been an outward passage of inward greatness about him; for the individual in unbuttoned doublet and bargeman's waistcoat, was no other than *William the Silent*. A different kind of leader had now descended among those rebels, yet it would be a great mistake to deny the capacity or vigorous intentions of the magnificent Earl, who certainly was like to find himself in a more difficult and responsible situation than any he had yet occupied.

And now began a triumphal progress through the land, with a series of mighty banquets and festivities, in which no man could play a better part than Leicester. From Flushing he came to Middelburg, where, upon Christmas eve (according to the new reckoning), there was an entertainment, every dish of which has been duly chronicled. Pigs served on their feet, pheasants in their feathers, and baked swans with their necks thrust through gigantic pie-crust; crystal castles of confectionary with silver streams flowing at their base, and fair virgins leaning from the battlements, looking for their new English champion, "wine in abundance, variety of all

[1] Bor, II. 685.

[2] Brooke's Sidney, 16, *seq.*

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sorts, and wonderful welcomes "[1]—such was the bill of fare. The next day the Lieutenant-General returned the compliment to the magistrates of Middelburg with a tremendous feast. Then came an interlude of unexpected famine; for as the Earl sailed with his suite in a fleet of two hundred vessels for Dort—a voyage of not many hours' usual duration—there descended a mighty frozen fog upon the waters, and they lay five whole days and nights in their ships, almost starved with hunger and cold—offering in vain a "pound of silver for a pound of bread."[2] Emerging at last from this dismal predicament, he landed at Dort, and so went to Rotterdam and Delft, everywhere making his way through lines of musketeers and civic functionaries, amid roaring cannon, pealing bells, burning cressets, blazing tar-barrels, fiery winged dragons, wreaths of flowers, and Latin orations.

The farther he went the braver seemed the country, and the better beloved his Lordship. Nothing was left undone, in the language of ancient chronicle, to fill the bellies and the heads of the whole company. At the close of the year he came to the Hague, where the festivities were unusually magnificent. A fleet of barges was sent to escort him. Peter, James, and John, met him upon the shore, while the Saviour appeared walking upon the waves, and ordered his disciples to cast their nets, and to present the fish to his Excellency. Farther on, he was confronted by Mars and Bellona, who recited Latin odes in his honour. Seven beautiful damsels upon a stage, representing the United States, offered him golden keys; seven others equally beautiful, embodying the seven sciences, presented him with garlands, while an enthusiastic barber adorned his shop with seven score of copper basins, with a wax-light in each, together with a rose, and a Latin posy in praise of Queen Elizabeth.[4] Then there were tiltings in the water between champions mounted upon whales, and other monsters of the deep—representatives of siege, famine, pestilence, and murder—the whole interspersed with fireworks, poetry, charades, and

[1] Stowe's Holinshed, iv. 641.
[2] Sir John Conway to ——, 27 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[3] Ibid. Stowe, *ubi sup.*
[4] Stowe's Holinshed, iv. 641, *seq.*

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harangues. Not Matthias, nor Anjou, nor King Philip, nor the Emperor Charles[1] in their triumphal progresses, had been received with more spontaneous or more magnificent demonstrations. Never had the living pictures been more startling, the allegories more incomprehensible, the banquets more elaborate, the orations more tedious. Beside himself with rapture, Leicester almost assumed the God. In Delft, a city which he described as "another London almost for beauty and fairness,"[2] he is said so far to have forgotten himself as to declare that his family had—in the person of Lady Jane Grey, his father, and brother—been unjustly deprived of the crown of England; an indiscretion which caused a shudder in all who heard him.[3] It was also very dangerous for the Lieutenant-General to exceed the bounds of becoming modesty at that momentous epoch. His power, as we shall soon have occasion to observe, was anomalous, and he was surrounded by enemies. He was not only to grapple with a rapidly developing opposition in the States, but he was surrounded with masked enemies, whom he had brought with him from England. Every act and word of his were liable to closest scrutiny, and likely to be turned against him. For it was most characteristic of that intriguing age, that even the astute Walsingham, who had an eye and an ear at every key-hole in Europe, was himself under closest domestic inspection. There was one Poley, a trusted servant of Lady Sidney, then living in the house of her father Walsingham, during Sir Philip's absence, who was in close communication with Lord Montjoy's brother, Blount, then high in favour of Queen Elizabeth—"whose grandmother she might be for his age and hers"—and with another brother Christopher Blount, at that moment in confidential attendance upon Lord Leicester in Holland. Now Poley, and both the Blounts, were,

[1] "It is thought that when Charles V. made his entries here in these towns, there was not greater ceremonies; the people so joyful, and thronging so great, to see his Lordship, as it was wonder," &c. Edward Burnham to Sir F. Walsingham, Dec. 27, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Leicester to Walsingham, 26 Dec. 1585, in Bruce, p. 31; and writing to Burghley the next day, he says, "the other towns I have passed by are very goodly towns, but this is the fairest of them all." (S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Hoofd, Vervolgh, 134.

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in reality, Papists, and in intimate correspondence with the agents of the Queen of Scots, both at home and abroad, although "forced to fawn upon Leicester, to see if they might thereby live quiet." They had a secret "alphabet," or cipher, among them, and protested warmly, that they "honoured the ground whereon Queen Mary trod better than Leicester with all his generation; and that they felt bound to serve her who was the only saint living on the earth."[1]

It may be well understood then that the Earl's position was a slippery one, and that great assumption might be unsafe. "He taketh the matter upon him," wrote Morgan to the Queen of Scots, "as though he were an absolute king; but he hath many personages about him of good place out of England, the best number whereof desire nothing more than his confusion. Some of them be gone with him to avoid the persecution for religion in England. My poor advice and labour shall not be wanting to give Leicester all dishonour, which will fall upon him in the end with shame enough; though for the present he be very strong."[2] Many of these personages of good place, and enjoying "charge and credit" with the Earl had very serious plans in their heads. Some of them meant "for the service of God, and the advantage of the King of Spain, to further the delivery of some notable towns in Holland and Zeeland to the said King and his ministers,"[3] and we are like to hear of these individuals again.

Meantime, the Earl of Leicester was at the Hague. Why was he there? What was his work? Why had Elizabeth done such violence to her affection as to part with her favourite-in-chief; and so far overcome her thrift, as to furnish forth, rather meagrely to be sure, that little army of Englishmen? Why had the flower of England's chivalry set foot upon that dark and bloody ground where there seemed so much disaster to encounter, and so little glory to reap? Why had England thrown herself so heroically into the breach, just as the last bulwarks were falling which protected Holland from the overwhelming onslaught of Spain? It was because Holland was the threshold of England; because the

[1] Morgan to Queen of Scots, in Murdin, ii. 495-501. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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two countries were one by danger and by destiny; because the naval expedition from Spain against England was already secretly preparing; because the deposed tyrant of Spain intended the Provinces, when again subjugated, as a stepping-stone to the conquest of England; because the naval and military forces of Holland—her numerous ships, her hardy mariners, her vast wealth, her commodious sea-ports, close to the English coast—if made Spanish property would render Philip invincible by sea and land; and because the downfall of Holland and of Protestantism would be death to Elizabeth, and annihilation to England.

There was little doubt on the subject in the minds of those engaged in this expedition. All felt most keenly the importance of the game, in which the Queen was staking her crown, and England its national existence.

"I pray God," said Wilford, an officer much in Walsingham's confidence, "that I live not to see this enterprise quail, and with it the utter subversion of religion throughout all Christendom. It may be I may be judged to be afraid of my own shadow. God grant it be so. But if her Majesty had not taken the helm in hand, and my Lord of Leicester sent over, this country had been gone ere this. . . . . This war doth defend England. Who is he that will refuse to spend his life and living in it? If her Majesty consume twenty thousand men in the cause, the experimented men that will remain will double that strength to the realm."[1]

This same Wilford commanded a company in Ostend, and was employed by Leicester in examining the defences of that important place. He often sent information to the Secretary, "troubling him with the rude stile of a poor soldier, being driven to scribble in haste." He reiterated, in more than one letter, the opinion, that twenty thousand men consumed in the war would be a saving in the end, and his own determination—although he had intended retiring from the military profession—to spend not only his life in the cause, but also the poor living that God had given him. "Her High-

[1] Thomas Wilford to Walsingham, $\frac{15}{25}$ Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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ness hath now entered into it," he said; "the fire is kindled: whosoever suffers it to go out, it will grow dangerous to that side. The whole state of religion is in question, and the realm of England also, if this action quail. *God grant we never live to see that doleful day.* Her Majesty hath such footing now in these parts, as I judge it impossible for the King to weary her out, if every man will put to the work his helping hand, whereby it may be lustily followed, and the war not suffered to cool. *The freehold of England will be worth but little, if this action quail,* and therefore I wish no subject to spare his purse towards it."[1]

Spain moved slowly. Philip the Prudent was not sudden or rash, but his whole life had proved, and was to prove, him inflexible in his purposes, and patient in his attempts to carry them into effect, even when the purposes had become chimerical, and the execution impossible. Before the fall of Antwerp he had matured his scheme for the invasion of England, in most of its details—a necessary part of which was of course the reduction of Holland and Zeeland. "Surely no danger nor fear of any attempt can grow to England," wrote Wilford, "so long as we can hold this country good." But never was honest soldier more mistaken than he, when he added:—"The Papists will make her Highness afraid of a great fleet now preparing in Spain. We hear it also, but it is only a scare-crow to cool the enterprise here."[2]

It was no scare-crow. On the very day on which Wilford was thus writing to Walsingham, Philip the Second was writing to Alexander Farnese. "The English," he said, "with their troops having gained a footing in the islands (Holland and Zeeland) give me much anxiety. The English Catholics are imploring me with much importunity to relieve them from the persecution they are suffering. When you sent me a plan, with the coasts, soundings, quicksands, and ports of England, you said that the enterprise of invading that country should be deferred till we had reduced the isles; that, having them, we could much more conveniently attack

[1] Thomas Wilford to Walsingham, $\frac{15}{25}$ Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Wilford to Burghley, $\frac{18}{28}$ Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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England; or that at least we should wait till we had got Antwerp. As the city is now taken, I want your advice *now* about the invasion of England. To cut the root of the evils constantly growing up there, both for God's service and mine, is desirable. So many evils will thus be remedied, which would not be by only warring with the islands. It would be an uncertain and expensive war to go to sea for the purpose of chastising the insolent English corsairs, however much they deserve chastisement. I charge you to be secret, to give the matter your deepest attention, and to let me have your opinions at once." Philip then added a postscript, in his own hand, concerning the importance of acquiring a sea-port in Holland, as a basis of operations against England. "Without a port," he said, "we can do nothing whatever."[1]

A few weeks later, the Grand Commander of Castile, by Philip's orders, and upon subsequent information received from the Prince of Parma, drew up an elaborate scheme for the invasion of England, and for the government of that country afterwards; a program according to which the King was to shape his course for a long time to come. The plot was an excellent plot. Nothing could be more artistic, more satisfactory to the prudent monarch; but time was to show whether there might not be some difficulty in the way of its satisfactory development.

"The enterprise," said the Commander, "ought certainly to be undertaken as serving the cause of the Lord. From the Pope we must endeavour to extract a promise of the largest aid we can get for the time when the enterprise can be undertaken. We must not declare that time however, in order to keep the thing a secret, and because perhaps thus more will be promised, under the impression that it will never take effect.[2] He added that the work could not well

[1] "Porque sin puerto no se puede hacer nada." Philip II. to Parma, 29 Dec. 1585. (Archivo de Simancas MS.)

[2] Parecer del Comendador Mayor dado a S. M. sobre la empresa de Inglaterra, anno 1586. (Archivo de Simancas MS.)

"Y al papa se procure sacar promosa de la mas gruesa ayuda que se pudiese para cuando se puede hacer la empresa, sin declararle el tiempo, por respeto del secreto, y porque quiza asi prometera mas, pensando que no ha de haber efecto."

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be attempted before August or September of the following year; the only fear of such delay being that the French could hardly be kept during all that time in a state of revolt."[1] For this was a uniform portion of the great scheme. France was to be kept, at Philip's expense, in a state of perpetual civil war; its every city and village to be the scene of unceasing conflict and bloodshed—subjects in arms against king, and family against family;—and the Netherlands were to be ravaged with fire and sword; all this in order that the path might be prepared for Spanish soldiers into the homes of England. So much of misery to the whole human race was it in the power of one painstaking elderly valetudinarian to inflict, by never for an instant neglecting the business of his life.

Troops and vessels for the English invasion ought, in the Commander's opinion, to be collected in Flanders, under colour of an enterprise against Holland and Zeeland, while the armada to be assembled in Spain, of galleons, galeazas, and galleys, should be ostensibly for an expedition to the Indies.

Then, after the conquest, came arrangements for the government of England. Should Philip administer his new kingdom by a viceroy, or should he appoint a king out of his own family? On the whole the chances for the Prince of Parma seemed the best of any. "We must liberate the Queen of Scotland," said the Grand Commander, "and marry her to some one or another, both in order to put her out of love with her son, and to conciliate her devoted adherents. Of course the husband should be one of your Majesty's nephews, and none could be so appropriate as the Prince of Parma, that great captain, whom his talents, and the part he has to bear in the business, especially indicate for that honour."[2]

Then there was a difficulty about the possible issue of such a marriage. The Farneses claimed Portugal; so that children sprung from the blood-royal of England blended

[1] "No se pueden tener tanto tiempo rebueltos." (Ibid.) [2] Ibid.

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with that of Parma, might choose to make those pretensions valid. But the objection was promptly solved by the Commander:—"The Queen of Scotland is sure to have no children," he said.[1]

That matter being adjusted, Parma's probable attitude as King of England was examined. It was true his ambition might cause occasional uneasiness, but then he might make himself still more unpleasant in the Netherlands. "If your Majesty suspects him," said the Commander, "which, after all, is unfair, seeing the way in which he has been conducting himself—it is to be remembered that in Flanders are similar circumstances and opportunities, and that he is well armed, much beloved in the country, and that the natives are of various humours. The English plan will furnish an honourable departure for him out of the Provinces; and the principle of loyal obligation will have much influence over so chivalrous a knight as he, when he is once placed on the English throne. Moreover, as he will be new there, he will have need of your Majesty's favour to maintain himself, and there will accordingly be good correspondence with Holland and the Islands. Thus your Majesty can put the Infanta and her husband into full possession of all the Netherlands; having provided them with so excellent a neighbour in England, and one so closely bound and allied to them. Then, as he is to have no English children" (we have seen that the Commander had settled that point) "he will be a very good mediator to arrange adoptions,[2] especially if you make good provision for his son Rainuccio in Italy. The reasons in favour of this plan being so much stronger than those against it, it would be well that your Majesty should write clearly to the Prince of Parma, directing him to conduct the

[1] —— "deshace esta sombra, que como no ha de tener hijos la Reyna de Escocia." (Ibid.)

[2] "Y esta es honrada salida y que a el le obligaria mucho en ley de tan gran caballero; de mas, como nuevo, para mantenerse en Inglaterra habia menester el favor de V. M. Y en entronizandose el alli, no faltaria concierto en Hollanda y las Islas, y podria V. M. meter en llena possession de todos los estados bajos a la Senora Infanta y su marido, dandoles tan buen vicino y tan obligado; y el no habiendo de tener hijos en Inglaterra, podria ser buen medianero para adopciones," &c. Parecer del Comendador Mayor, &c. (MS. before cited.)

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enterprise" (the English invasion), "and to give him the first offer for this marriage (with Queen Mary) if he likes the scheme. If not, he had better mention which of the Archdukes should be substituted in his place."[1]

There happened to be no lack of archdukes at that period for anything comfortable that might offer—such as a throne in England, Holland, or France—and the Austrian House was not remarkable for refusing convenient marriages; but the immediate future only could show whether Alexander I. of the House of Farnese was to reign in England, or whether the next king of that country was to be called Matthias, Maximilian, or Ernest of Hapsburg.

Meantime the Grand Commander was of opinion that the invasion-project was to be pushed forward as rapidly and as secretly as possible; because, before any one of Philip's nephews could place himself upon the English throne, it was first necessary to remove Elizabeth from that position. Before disposing of the kingdom, the preliminary step of conquering it was necessary. Afterwards it would be desirable, without wasting more time than was requisite, to return with a large portion of the invading force out of England, in order to complete the conquest of Holland. For after all, England was to be subjugated only as a portion of one general scheme; the main features of which were the reannexation of Holland and "the islands," and the acquisition of unlimited control upon the seas.

Thus the invasion of England was no "scarecrow," as Wilford imagined, but a scheme already thoroughly matured. If Holland and Zeeland should meantime fall into the hands of Philip, it was no exaggeration on that soldier's part to observe that the "freehold of England would be worth but little."[2]

[1] Parecer del Comendador Mayor, &c. (MS. before cited.)

[2] Upon that point there was no difference of opinion. The statesmen and soldiers of England were unanimous. "If I should not,' said Burghley, "with all the powers of my heart, continually both wish and work advancement unto this action, I were an accursed person in the sight of God; considering the ends thereof tend to the glory of God, to the safety of the Queen's person, to the preservation of this realm in a perpetual quietness, wherein, for my particular interest, both for myself and my posterity, I

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To oppose this formidable array against the liberties of Europe stood Elizabeth Tudor and the Dutch Republic. For the Queen, however arbitrary her nature, fitly embodied much of the nobler elements in the expanding English national character. She felt instinctively that her reliance in the impending death-grapple was upon the popular principle, the national sentiment, both in her own country and in Holland. That principle and that sentiment were symbolized in the Netherland revolt; and England, although under a somewhat despotic rule, was already fully pervaded with the instinct of self-government. The people held the purse and the sword. No tyranny could be permanently established so long as the sovereign was obliged to come every year before Parliament to ask for subsidies; so long as all the citizens and yeomen of England had weapons in their possession, and were carefully trained to use them; so long, in short, as the militia was the only army, and private adventurers or trading companies created and controlled the only navy. War, colonization, conquest, traffic, formed a joint business and a private speculation. If there were danger that England, yielding to purely mercantile habits of thought and action, might degenerate from the more martial standard to which she had been accustomed, there might be virtue in that Netherland enter-

have as much interest as any of my degree." (Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' p. 24.)

Walsingham had been straightforward from the first in his advocacy of the Netherland cause, which he knew to be identical with that of England, and, as we have seen, had been often indignant at the shufflings practised by the Queen's government in the matter. He was sincerely glad that Leicester had gone to the Provinces before it was quite too late. "All honest and well-affected subjects," said he to the Earl, "have cause to thank God that you arrived there so seasonably as you did; for howsoever we mislike of the enterprise here, *all England should have smarted* if the same had not been taken in hand." (Ibid., p. 36.)

As for Leicester himself, he was always vehement upon the subject. After his arrival in the country he was more intensely alive than ever to the dangers impending over England, in case the rebel Provinces should be reannexed to Spain. "He is senseless," said he, "that conceiveth not that if the King of Spain had these countries at his commandment—let her Majesty have the best peace that ever was, or can be made—and we shall find, as the world now standeth, that he will force the Queen of England and England to be at his disposition. What with Spain for the west, and what with these countries for the east, England shall traffic no farther any of these ways than he shall give leave, without every voyage shall ask the charge of a whole navy to pass withal." (Ibid., p. 82.)

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prise, which was now to call forth all her energies. The Provinces would be a seminary for English soldiers.

"There can be no doubt of our driving the enemy out of the country through famine and excessive charges," said the plain-spoken English soldier already quoted, who came out with Leicester, "if every one of us will put our minds to go forward *without making a miserable gain by the wars.* A man may see, by this little progress-journey, what this long peace hath wrought in us. We are weary of the war before we come where it groweth, such a danger hath this long peace brought us into. This is, and will be, in my opinion, a most fit school and nursery to nourish soldiers to be able to keep and defend our country hereafter, if men will follow it."[1]

Wilford was vehement in denouncing the mercantile tendencies of his countrymen, and returned frequently to that point in his communications with Walsingham and other statesmen. "*God hath stirred up this action,*" he repeated again, "to be a school to breed up soldiers to defend the freedom of England, which through these long times of peace and quietness is brought into a most dangerous estate, if it should be attempted. Our delicacy is such that we are already weary, yet this journey is naught in respect to the misery and hardship that soldiers must and do endure."[2]

He was right in his estimate of the effect likely to be produced by the war upon the military habits of Englishmen; for there can be no doubt that the organization and discipline of English troops was in anything but a satisfactory state at that period. There was certainly vast room for improvement. Nevertheless he was wrong in his views of the leading tendencies of his age. Holland and England, self-helping, self-moving, were already inaugurating a new era in the history of the world. The spirit of commercial maritime enterprise—then expanding rapidly into large proportions—was to be matched against the religious and knightly enthusiasm which had accomplished such wonders in an age that

[1] Thomas Wilford to Walsingham, $\frac{15}{25}$ Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Wilford to Burghley, $\frac{18}{28}$ Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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was passing away. Spain still personified, and had ever personified, chivalry, loyalty, piety; but its chivalry, loyalty, and piety, were now in a corrupted condition. The form was hollow, and the sacred spark had fled. In Holland and England intelligent enterprise had not yet degenerated into mere greed for material prosperity. The love of danger, the thirst for adventure, the thrilling sense of personal responsibility and human dignity—not the base love for land and lucre—were the governing sentiments which led those bold Dutch and English rovers to circumnavigate the world in cockle-shells, and to beard the most potent monarch on the earth, both at home and abroad, with a handful of volunteers.

This then was the contest, and this the machinery by which it was to be maintained. A struggle for national independence, liberty of conscience, freedom of the seas, against sacerdotal and world-absorbing tyranny; a mortal combat of the splendid infantry of Spain and Italy, the professional reiters of Germany, the floating castles of a world-empire, with the militiamen and mercantile-marine of England and Holland united. Holland had been engaged twenty years long in the conflict. England had thus far escaped it; but there was no doubt, and could be none, that her time had come. She must fight the battle of Protestantism on sea and shore, shoulder to shoulder, with the Netherlanders, or await the conqueror's foot on her own soil.

What now was the disposition and what the means of the Provinces to do their part in the contest? If the twain, as Holland wished, had become of one flesh, would England have been the loser? Was it quite sure that Elizabeth—had she even accepted the less compromising title which she refused—would not have been quite as much the protected as the "protectress?"

It is very certain that the English, on their arrival in the Provinces, were singularly impressed by the opulent and stately appearance of the country and its inhabitants. Notwithstanding the tremendous war which the Hollanders had been waging against Spain for twenty years, their commerce

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had continued to thrive, and their resources to increase. Leicester was in a state of constant rapture at the magnificence which surrounded him, from his first entrance into the country. Notwithstanding the admiration expressed by the Hollanders for the individual sumptuousness of the Lieutenant-General; his followers, on their part, were startled by the general luxury of their new allies. "The realm is rich and full of men," said Wilford, "the sums men exceed in apparel would bear the brunt of this war;"[1] and again, "if the excess used in sumptuous apparel were only abated, and that we could convert the same to these wars, it would stop a great gap."[2]

The favourable view taken by the English as to the resources and inclination of the Netherland commonwealth was universal. "The general wish and desire of these countrymen," wrote Sir Thomas Shirley, "is that the amity begun between England and this nation may be everlasting, and there is not any of our company of judgment but wish the same. For all they that see the goodliness and stateliness of these towns, strengthened both with fortification and natural situation, all able to defend themselves with their own abilities, must needs think it too fair a prey to be let pass, and a thing most worthy to be embraced."[3]

Leicester, whose enthusiasm continued to increase as rapidly as the Queen's zeal seemed to be cooling, was most anxious lest the short-comings of his own Government should work irreparable evil. "I pray you, my lord," he wrote to Burghley, "forget not us poor exiles; if you do, God must and will forget you. And great pity it were that so noble provinces and goodly havens, with such infinite ships and mariners, should not be always as they may now easily be, at the assured devotion of England. In my opinion he can neither love Queen nor country that would not wish and further it should be so. And seeing her Majesty is thus far entered into

[1] Wilford to Walsingham. (MS. before cited.)

[2] Wilford to Burghley. (MS. before cited.)

[3] Sir Thomas Shirley to Earl of Leicester, $\frac{26 \text{ Dec. } 1585.}{5 \text{ Jan. } 1586.}$ (S. P. Office MS.)

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the cause, and that these people comfort themselves in full hope of her favour, it were a sin and a shame it should not be handled accordingly, both for honour and surety."[1]

Sir John Conway, who accompanied the Earl through the whole of his "progress-journey," was quite as much struck as he by the flourishing aspect and English proclivities of the Provinces. "The countries which we have passed," he said, "are fertile in their nature; the towns, cities, buildings, of more state and beauty, to such as have travelled other countries, than any they have ever seen. The people the most industrious by all means to live that be in the world, and, no doubt, passing rich. They outwardly show themselves of good heart, zeal, and loyalty, towards the Queen our mistress. There is no doubt that the general number of them had rather come under her Majesty's regiment, than to continue under the States and burgomasters of their country. The impositions which they lay in defence of their State is wonderful. If her Highness proceed in this beginning, she may retain these parts hers, with their good love, and her great glory and gain. I would she might as perfectly see the whole country, towns, profits, and pleasures thereof, in a glass, as she may her own face; I do then assure myself she would with careful consideration receive them, and not allow of any man's reason to the contrary. . . . The country is worthy any prince in the world, the people do reverence the Queen, and in love of her do so believe that the Grace of Leicester is by God and her sent among them for her good. And they believe in him for the redemption of their bodies, as they do in God for their souls. I dare pawn my soul, that if her Majesty will allow him the just and rightful mean to manage this cause, that he will so handle the manner and matter as shall highly both please and profit her Majesty, and increase her country, and his own honour."[2]

Lord North, who held a high command in the auxiliary force, spoke also with great enthusiasm. "Had your Lord-

[1] Leicester to Burghley, 27 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Sir John Conway to ———, 27 Dec, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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ship seen," he wrote to Burghley, "with what thankful hearts these countries receive all her Majesty's subjects, what multitudes of people they be, what stately cities and buildings they have, how notably fortified by art, how strong by nature, how fertile the whole country, and how wealthy it is, you would, I know, praise the Lord that opened your lips to undertake this enterprise, the continuance and good success whereof will eternise her Majesty, beautify her crown, with the most shipping, with the most populous and wealthy countries, that ever prince added to his kingdom, or that is or can be found in Europe. I lack wit, good my Lord, to dilate this matter."[1]

Leicester, better informed than some of those in his employment, entertained strong suspicions concerning Philip's intentions with regard to England; but he felt sure that the only way to laugh at a Spanish invasion was to make Holland and England as nearly one as it was possible to do.

"No doubt that the King of Spain's preparations by sea be great," he said; "but I know that all that he and his friends can make are not able to match with her Majesty's forces, if it please her to use the means that God hath given her. But besides her own, if she need, I will undertake to furnish her from hence, upon two months' warning, a navy for strong and tall ships, with their furniture and mariners, that the King of Spain, and all that he can make, shall not be able to encounter with them. I think the bruit of his preparations is made the greater to terrify her Majesty and this country people. But, thanked be God, her Majesty hath little cause to fear him. *And in this country they esteem no more of his power by sea than I do of six fisher-boats off Rye.*"[2]

Thus suggestive is it to peep occasionally behind the curtain. In the calm cabinet of the Escorial, Philip and his *comendador mayor* are laying their heads together, preparing the invasion of England; making arrangements for King Alexander's coronation in that island, and—like sensible, far-

[1] Lord North to Lord Burghley, 27 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)
[2] Leicester to Burghley, 29 Jan. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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sighted persons as they are—even settling the succession to the throne after Alexander's death, instead of carelessly leaving such distant details to chance, or subsequent consideration. On the other hand, plain Dutch sea-captains, grim beggars of the sea, and the like, denizens of a free commonwealth and of the boundless ocean—men who are at home on blue water, and who have burned gunpowder against those prodigious slave-rowed galleys of Spain—together with their new allies, the dauntless mariners of England—who at this very moment are "singeing the King of Spain's beard," as it had never been singed before—are not so much awe-struck with the famous preparations for invasion as was perhaps to be expected. There may be a delay, after all, before Parma can be got safely established in London, and Elizabeth in Orcus, and before the blood-tribunal of the Inquisition can substitute its sway for that of the "most noble, wise, and learned United States." Certainly, Philip the Prudent would have been startled, difficult as he was to astonish, could he have known that those rebel Hollanders of his made no more account of his slowly-preparing invincible armada than of six fisher-boats off Rye. Time alone could show where confidence had been best placed. Meantime it was certain, that it well behoved Holland and England to hold hard together, nor let "that enterprise quail."

The famous expedition of Sir Francis Drake was the commencement of a revelation. "That is the string," said Leicester, "that touches the King indeed."[1] It was soon to be made known to the world that the ocean was not a Spanish Lake, nor both the Indies the private property of Philip. "While the riches of the Indies continue," said Leicester, "he thinketh he will be able to weary out all other princes; and I know, by good means, that he more feareth this action of Sir Francis than he ever did anything that has been attempted against him."[2] With these continued assaults upon the golden treasure-houses of Spain, and by a determined effort to maintain the still more important stronghold

[1] Leicester to Burghley, 29 Jan. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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which had been wrested from her in the Netherlands, England might still be safe. "This country is so full of ships and mariners," said Leicester, "so abundant in wealth, and in the means to make money, that, had it but stood neutral, what an aid had her Majesty been deprived of. But if it had been the enemy's also, I leave it to your consideration what had been likely to ensue. These people do now honour and love her Majesty in marvellous sort."[1]

There was but one feeling on this most important subject among the English who went to the Netherlands. All held the same language. The question was plainly presented to England whether she would secure to herself the great bulwark of her defence, or place it in the hands of her mortal foe? How could there be doubt or supineness on such a momentous subject? "Surely, my Lord," wrote Richard Cavendish to Burghley, "if you saw the wealth, the strength, the shipping, and abundance of mariners, whereof these countries stand furnished, your heart would quake to think that so hateful an enemy as Spain should again be furnished with such instruments; and the Spaniards themselves do nothing doubt upon the hope of the consequence hereof, to assure themselves of the certain ruin of her Majesty and the whole estate."[2]

And yet at the very outset of Leicester's administration, there was a whisper of peace-overtures to Spain, secretly made by Elizabeth in her own behalf, and in that of the Provinces. We shall have soon occasion to examine into the truth of these rumours, which, whether originating in truth or falsehood, were most pernicious in their effects. The Hollanders were determined never to return to slavery again, so long as they could fire a shot in their own defence. They earnestly wished English cooperation, but it was the cooperation of English matchlocks and English cutlasses, not English protocols and apostilles. It was military, not diplomatic machinery that they required. If they could

[1] Leicester to Burghley, (MS. before cited.)
[2] Richard Cavendish to Lord Burghley, 18 March, 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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make up their minds to submit to Philip and the Inquisition again, Philip and the Holy Office were but too ready to receive the erring penitents to their embrace without a go-between.

It was war, not peace, therefore, that Holland meant by the English alliance. It was war, not peace, that Philip intended. It was war, not peace, that Elizabeth's most trusty counsellors knew to be inevitable. There was also, as we have shown, no doubt whatever as to the good disposition, and the great power of the republic to bear its share in the common cause. The enthusiasm of the Hollanders was excessive. "There was such a noise, both in Delft, Rotterdam, and Dort," said Leicester, "in crying 'God save the Queen!' as if she had been in Cheapside."[1] Her own subjects could not be more loyal than were the citizens and yeomen of Holland. "The members of the States dare not but be Queen Elizabeth's," continued the Earl, "for by the living God! if there should fall but the least unkindness through their default, the people would kill them. All sorts of people, from highest to lowest, assure themselves, now that they have her Majesty's good countenance, to beat all the Spaniards out of their country. Never was there people in such jollity as these be. I could be content to lose a limb, could her Majesty see these countries and towns as I have done."[2] He was in truth excessively elated, and had already, in imagination, vanquished Alexander Farnese, and eclipsed the fame of William the Silent. "They will serve under me," he observed, "with a better will than ever they served under the Prince of Orange. Yet they loved him well, but they never hoped of the liberty of this country till now."[3]

Thus the English government had every reason to be satisfied with the aspect of its affairs in the Netherlands. But the nature of the Earl's authority was indefinite. The Queen had refused the sovereignty and the protectorate. She had also

Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' p. 30, 31, 32, $\frac{26 \text{ Dec. } 1585.}{5 \text{ Jan. } 1586.}$

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid, p. 61, $\frac{\quad}{24}$ Jan. 1586.

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distinctly and peremptorily forbidden Leicester to assume any office or title that might seem at variance with such a refusal on her part. Yet it is certain that, from the very first, he had contemplated some slight disobedience to these prohibitions. "What government is requisite"—wrote he in a secret memorandum of "things most necessary to understand"—"to be appointed to him that shall be their governor? First, that he have as much authority as the Prince of Orange, or any other governor or captain-general, hath had heretofore."[1] Now the Prince of Orange hath been stadholder of each of the United Provinces, governor-general, commander-in-chief, count of Holland in prospect, and sovereign, if he had so willed it. It would doubtless have been most desirable for the country, in its confused condition, had there been a person competent to wield, and willing to accept, the authority once exercised by William I. But it was also certain that this was exactly the authority which Elizabeth had forbidden Leicester to assume. Yet it is difficult to understand what position the Queen intended that her favourite should maintain, nor how he was to carry out her instructions, while submitting to her prohibitions. He was directed to cause the confused government of the Provinces to be redressed, and a better form of polity to be established. He was ordered, in particular, to procure a radical change in the constitution, by causing the deputies to the General Assembly to be empowered to decide upon important matters, without, as had always been the custom, making direct reference to the assemblies of the separate Provinces. He was instructed to bring about, in some indefinite way, a complete reform in financial matters, by compelling the States-General to raise money by liberal taxation, according to the "advice of her Majesty, delivered unto them by her lieutenant."[2]

And how was this radical change in the institutions of the Provinces to be made by an English earl, whose only authority

[1] Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' p. 20, A.D. 1585.
[2] Leycester's Instructions, in Bruce, 12-15, December, 1585.

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was that of commander-in-chief over five thousand half-starved, unpaid, utterly-forlorn English troops?

The Netherland envoys in England, in their parting advice, most distinctly urged him "to hale authority with the first, to declare himself chief head and governor-general" of the whole country,[1]—for it was a political head that was wanted in order to restore unity of action—not an additional general, where there were already generals in plenty. Sir John Norris, valiant, courageous, experienced—even if not, as Walsingham observed, a "religious soldier," nor learned in anything "but a kind of licentious and corrupt government"[2]—was not likely to require the assistance of the new lieutenant-general in field operations, nor could the army be brought into a state of thorough discipline and efficiency by the magic of Leicester's name. The rank and file of the English army—not the commanders—needed strengthening. The soldiers required shoes and stockings, bread and meat, and for these articles there were not the necessary funds, nor would the title of Lieutenant-General supply the deficiency. The little auxiliary force was, in truth, in a condition most pitiable to behold: it was difficult to say whether the soldiers who had been already for a considerable period in the Netherlands, or those who had been recently levied in the purlieus of London, were in the most unpromising plight. The beggarly state in which Elizabeth had been willing that her troops should go forth to the wars was a sin and a disgrace. Well might her Lieutenant-General say that her "poor subjects were no better than abjects."[3] There were few effective companies remaining of the old force. "There is but a small number of the first bands left," said Sir John Conway, "and those so pitiful and unable ever to serve again, as I leave to speak further of them, to avoid grief to your heart. A monstrous fault there hath been somewhere."[4]

[1] Advice of the Commissioners to Leicester, in Bruce, 15-19, A.D. 1585.

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 222, $\frac{11}{21}$ April, 1586.

[3] Ibid. 23, $\frac{5}{15}$ Dec., 1585.

[4] Sir John Conway to ——, 27 Dec., 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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Leicester took a manful and sagacious course at starting. Those who had no stomach for the fight were ordered to depart. The chaplain gave them sermons; the Lieutenant-General, on St. Stephen's day, made them a "pithy and honourable" oration, and those who had the wish or the means to buy themselves out of the adventure, were allowed to do so: for the Earl was much disgusted with the raw material out of which he was expected to manufacture serviceable troops. Swaggering ruffians from the disreputable haunts of London, cockney apprentices, broken-down tapsters, discarded serving men; the Bardolphs and Pistols, Mouldys, Warts, and the like—more at home in tavern-brawls or in dark lanes than on the battle-field—were not the men to be entrusted with the honour of England at a momentous crisis. He spoke with grief and shame of the worthless character and condition of the English youths sent over to the Netherlands. "Believe me," said he, "you will all repent the cockney kind of bringing up at this day of young men. They be gone hence with shame enough, and too many, that I will warrant, will make as many frays with bludgeons and bucklers as any in London shall do; but such shall never have credit with me again. Our simplest men in show have been our best men, and your *gallant blood and ruffian men the worst of all others.*" [1]

Much winnowed, as it was, the small force might in time become more effective; and the Earl spent freely of his own substance to supply the wants of his followers, and to atone for the avarice of his sovereign. The picture painted however by muster-master Digges of the plumed troops that had thus come forth to maintain the honour of England and the cause of liberty, was anything but imposing. None knew better than Digges their squalid and slovenly condition, or was more anxious to effect a reformation therein. "A very wise, stout fellow he is," said the Earl, "and very careful to serve thoroughly her Majesty." [2] Leicester relied much upon his

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 228, $\frac{16}{26}$ April, 1586.

[2] Ibid. 125, $\frac{24 \text{ Feb.}}{6 \text{ March}}$, 1585-6.

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efforts. "There is good hope," said the muster-master, "that his excellency will shortly establish such good order for the government and training of our nation, that these weak, bad-furnished, ill-armed, and worse-trained bands, thus rawly left unto him, shall within a few months prove as well armed, trained, complete, gallant companies as shall be found elsewhere in Europe."[1] The damage they were likely to inflict upon the enemy seemed very problematical, until they should have been improved by some wholesome ball-practice. "They are so unskilful," said Digges, "that if they should be carried to the field no better trained than yet they are, they would prove much more dangerous to their own leaders and companies than any ways serviceable on their enemies. The hard and miserable estate of the soldiers generally, excepting officers, hath been such, as by the confessions of the captains themselves, they have been offered by many of their soldiers thirty and forty pounds a piece to be dismissed and sent away; whereby I doubt not the flower of the pressed English bands are gone, and the remnant supplied with such paddy persons as commonly, in voluntary procurements, men are glad to accept."[2]

Even after the expiration of four months the condition of the paddy persons continued most destitute. The English soldiers became mere barefoot starving beggars in the streets, as had never been the case in the worst of times, when the States were their paymasters.[3] The little money brought from the treasury by the Earl, and the large sums which he had contributed out of his own pocket, had been spent in settling, and not fully settling, old scores. "Let me entreat

[1] Digges to Walsingham, $\frac{2}{12}$ Jan., 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Digges to Walsingham, MS. before cited.

[3] "My good Lord," wrote Cavendish to Burghley, "what English heart can without shame or grief hear the Flushingers reproachfully say, that even in their hardest estate the soldiers of that town were always paid at every 15 days' end, whereas the same being now in H. Majesty's hands, her people there can get no pay in three months, so that they be almost driven either to starve or beg in the streets. These be heavy spectacles in the eyes of such as look for relief at H. Majesty's hands. My good Lord, the storm of my careful and grieved mind doth carry me I know not whither," &c. 18 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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you," wrote Leicester to Walsingham, "to be a mean to her Majesty, that the poor soldiers be not beaten for my sake. *There came no penny of treasure over* since my coming hither. That which then came was most part due before it came. There is much still due. They cannot get a penny, their credit is spent, *they perish for want of victuals and clothing* in great numbers. The whole are ready to mutiny. They cannot be gotten out to service, because they cannot discharge the debts they owe in the places where they are. I have let of my own more than I may spare."[1] "There was no soldier yet able to buy *himself a pair of hose*," said the Earl again, "and it is too, too great shame to see how they go, and *it kills their hearts to show themselves among men*."[2]

There was no one to dispute the Earl's claims. The Nassau family was desperately poor, and its chief, young Maurice, although he had been elected stadholder of Holland and Zeeland, had every disposition—as Sir Philip upon his arrival in Flushing immediately informed his uncle—to submit to the authority of the new governor. Louisa de Coligny, widow of William the Silent, was most anxious for the English alliance, through which alone she believed that the fallen fortunes of the family could be raised. It was thus only, she thought, that the vengeance for which she thirsted upon the murderers of her father and her husband could be obtained. "We see now," she wrote to Walsingham, in a fiercer strain than would seem to comport with so gentle a nature—deeply wronged as the daughter of Coligny and the wife of Orange had been by Papists—"we see now the effects of our God's promises. He knows when it pleases Him to avenge the blood of His own, and I confess that I feel most keenly the joy which is shared in by the whole Church of God. There is none that has received more wrong from these murderers than I have done, and I esteem myself happy in the midst of my miseries that God has permitted me to see some vengeance. These begin-

[1] Leicester to Burghley and Walsingham, March 15, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Bruce, 167, $\frac{9}{19}$ March, 1586.

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nings make me hope that I shall see yet more, which will be not less useful to the good, both in your country and in these isles." [1]

There was no disguise as to the impoverished condition to which the Nassau family had been reduced by the self-devotion of its chief. They were obliged to ask alms of England, until the "sapling should become a tree." "Since it is the will of God," wrote the Princess to Davison, "I am not ashamed to declare the necessity of our house, for it is in His cause that it has fallen. I pray you, Sir, therefore to do me and these children the favour to employ your thoughts in this regard." [2] If there had been any strong French proclivities on their part —as had been so warmly asserted—they were likely to disappear. Villiers, who had been a confidential friend of William the Silent, and a strong favourer of France, in vain endeavoured to keep alive the ancient sentiments towards that country, although he was thought to be really endeavouring to bring about a submission of the Nassaus to Spain. "This Villiers," said Leicester, "is a most vile traitorous knave, and doth abuse a young nobleman here extremely, the Count Maurice. For all his religion, he is a more earnest persuader secretly to have him yield to a reconciliation than Sainte Aldegonde was. He shall not tarry ten days neither in Holland nor Zeeland. He is greatly hated here of all sorts, and it shall go hard but I will win the young Count." [3]

As for Hohenlo, whatever his opinions might once have been regarding the comparative merits of Frenchmen and Englishmen, he was now warmly in favour of England, and expressed an intention of putting an end to the Villiers'

[1] "Nous voyons, Monsieur, les effets des promesses de notre Dieu qui scait quand il luy plait venger le sang des siens, y faut que je confesse que je resens fort particulierement ceste joye commune a toute l'eglise de Dieu; comme ny ayant personne qui eust receu plus d'offence de ces massacreurs, et m'estime heureuse parmi tous mes malheurs de ce que Dieu a permis que j'en aye veu la vengeance. Ces commencemens me font esperer que j'en verrai encores d'autres, qui ne seront moins utiles aux gens de bien, et en particulier en votre royaume et en ces Isles." Princess of Orange to Sir F. Walsingham, $\frac{1}{11}$ Jan., 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Princess of Orange to Davison, 7 Jan., 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Bruce, 73, $\frac{22 \text{ Jan.}}{1 \text{ Feb.}}$ 1585-6.

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influence by simply drowning Villiers. The announcement of this summary process towards the counsellor was not untinged with rudeness towards the pupil. "The young Count," said Leicester, "by Villiers' means, was not willing to have Flushing rendered, which the Count Hollock perceiving, told the Count Maurice, in a great rage, that if he took any course than that of the Queen of England, and swore by no beggars, he would drown his priest in the haven before his face, and turn himself and his mother-in-law out of their house there, and thereupon went with Mr. Davison to the delivery of it."[1] Certainly, if Hohenlo permitted himself such startling demonstrations towards the son and widow of William the Silent, it must have been after his habitual potations had been of the deepest. Nevertheless it was satisfactory for the new chieftain to know that the influence of so vehement a partisan was secured for England. The Count's zeal deserved gratitude upon Leicester's part, and Leicester was grateful. "This man must be cherished," said the Earl; "he is sound and faithful, and hath indeed all the chief holds in his hands, and at his commandment. Ye shall do well to procure him a letter of thanks, taking knowledge in general of his good-will to her Majesty. He is a right Almayn in manner and fashion, free of his purse and of his drink, yet do I wish him her Majesty's pensioner before any prince in Germany, for he loves her and is able to serve her, and doth desire to be known her servant. He hath been laboured by his nearest kinsfolk and friends in Germany to have left the States and to have the King of Spain's pension and very great reward; but he would not. I trust her Majesty will accept of his offer to be her servant during his life, being indeed a very noble soldier."[2] The Earl was indeed inclined to take so cheerful view of matters as to believe that he should even effect a reform in the noble soldier's most unpleasant characteristic. "Hollock is a wise gallant gentleman," he said, "and very well esteemed. He hath only one fault, which is drinking; but good hope that he will amend it. Some make me believe that I shall be

[1] Bruce, 74, 75, date just quoted. [2] Ibid.

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able to do much with him, and I mean to do my best, for I see no man that knows all these countries, and the people of all sorts, like him, and this fault overthrows all."[1]

Accordingly, so long as Maurice continued under the tutelage of this uproarious cavalier—who, at a later day, was to become his brother-in-law—he was not likely to interfere with Leicester's authority. The character of the young Count was developing slowly. More than his father had ever done, he deserved the character of the taciturn. A quiet keen observer of men and things, not demonstrative nor talkative, nor much given to writing—a modest, calm, deeply-reflecting student of military and mathematical science—he was not at that moment deeply inspired by political ambition. He was perhaps more desirous of raising the fallen fortunes of his house than of securing the independence of his country. Even at that early age, however, his mind was not easy to read, and his character was somewhat of a puzzle to those who studied it. "I see him much discontented with the States," said Leicester; "he hath a sullen deep wit. The young gentleman is yet to be won only to her Majesty, I perceive, of his own inclination. The house is marvellous poor and little regarded by the States, and if they get anything it is like to be by her Majesty, which should be altogether, and she may easily do for him to win him sure. I will undertake it."[2] Yet the Earl was ever anxious about some of the influences which surrounded Maurice, for he thought him more easily guided than he wished him to be by any others but himself. "He stands upon making and marring," he said, "as he meets with good counsel."[3] And at another time he observed, "The young gentleman hath a solemn sly wit; but, in troth, if any be to be doubted toward the King of Spain, it is he and his counsellors, for they have been altogether, so far, French, and so far in mislike with England as they cannot almost hide it."[4]

And there was still another member of the house of Nassau

[1] Bruce, 61, $\frac{16}{26}$ Jan., 1586.

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 61, 62, $\frac{14}{21}$ Jan., 1585-6.

[3] Ibid. 374, $\frac{29\ July}{8\ Aug.}$, 1586.

[4] Ibid. 74, $\frac{22\ Jan.}{1\ Feb.}$, 1586.

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who was already an honour to his illustrious race. Count William Lewis, hardly more than a boy in years, had already served many campaigns, and had been desperately wounded in the cause for which so much of the heroic blood of his race had been shed. Of the five Nassau brethren, his father Count John was the sole survivor, and as devoted as ever to the cause of Netherland liberty. The other four had already laid down their lives in its defence. And William Lewis, was worthy to be the nephew of William and Lewis, Henry and Adolphus, and the son of John. Not at all a beautiful or romantic hero in appearance, but an odd-looking little man, with a round bullet-head, close-clipped hair, a small, twinkling, sagacious eye, rugged, somewhat puffy features screwed whimsically awry, with several prominent warts dotting, without ornamenting, all that was visible of a face which was buried up to the ears in a furzy thicket of yellow-brown beard, the tough young stadholder of Friesland, in his iron corslet, and halting upon his maimed leg, had come forth with other notable personages to the Hague. He wished to do honour heartily and freely to Queen Elizabeth and her representative. And Leicester was favourably impressed with his new acquaintance. "Here is another little fellow," he said, "as little as may be, but one of the gravest and wisest young men that ever I spake withal; it is the Count Guilliam of Nassau. He governs Friesland; I would every Province had such another."[1]

Thus, upon the great question which presented itself upon the very threshold—the nature and extent of the authority to be exercised by Leicester—the most influential Netherlanders were in favour of a large and liberal interpretation of his powers. The envoys in England, the Nassau family, Hohenlo, the prominent members of the States, such as the shrewd, plausible Menin, the "honest and painful" Falk,[2] and the chancellor of Gelderland—"that very great, wise, old man Leoninus,"[3] as Leicester called him,—were all desirous

[1] Bruce, 61, $\frac{14}{24}$ Jan., 1586.

[2] Ibid. 33, $\frac{26 \text{ Dec. } 1585}{5 \text{ Feb. } 1586}$.

[3] Leicester to Burghley, 18th Feb., 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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that he should assume an absolute governor-generalship over the whole country. This was a grave and a delicate matter, and needed to be severely scanned, without delay. But besides the natives, there were two Englishmen—together with ambassador Davison—who were his official advisers. Bartholomew Clerk, LL.D., and Sir Henry Killigrew had been appointed by the Queen to be members of the council of the United States, according to the provisions of the August treaty. The learned Bartholomew hardly seemed equal to his responsible position among those long-headed Dutch politicians. Philip Sidney—the only blemish in whose character was an intolerable tendency to puns—observed that "Doctor Clerk was of those clerks that are not always the wisest, and so my lord too late was finding him."[1] The Earl himself, who never undervalued the intellect of the Netherlanders whom he came to govern, anticipated but small assistance from the English civilian. "I find no great stuff in my little colleague," he said, "nothing that I looked for. It is a pity you have no more of his profession, able men to serve. This man hath good will, and a pretty scholar's wit; *but he is too little for these big fellows, as heavy as her Majesty thinks them to be. I would she had but one or two, such as the worst of half a score be here.*"[2] The other English state-counsellor seemed more promising. "I have one here," said the Earl, "in whom I take no small comfort; that is little Hal Killigrew. I assure you, my lord, he is a notable servant, and more in him than ever I heretofore thought of him, though I always knew him to be an honest man and an able."[3]

But of all the men that stood by Leicester's side, the most faithful, devoted, sagacious, experienced, and sincere of his counsellors, English or Flemish, was envoy Davison. It is important to note exactly the opinion that had been formed of him by those most competent to judge, before events in

[1] Gray's Sidney, p. 313. Thus: "Turner, I hope, will serve my turn well;" and again, "Mr. Paul Bus hath too many busses in his head," and so on. (Ibid. 313, 327.)

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 33.

[3] Leycester to Burghley, 18 Feb., 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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which he was called on to play a prominent and responsible though secondary part, had placed him in a somewhat false position.

"Mr. Davison," wrote Sidney, "is here very careful in her Majesty's causes, and in your Lordship's. He takes great pains and goes to great charges for it." The Earl himself was always vehement in his praise. "Mr. Davison," said he at another time, "has dealt most painfully and chargeably in her Majesty's service here, and you shall find him as sufficiently able to deliver the whole state of this country as any man that ever was in it, acquainted with all sorts here that are men of dealing. Surely, my Lord, you shall do a good deed that he may be remembered with her Majesty's gracious consideration, for his being here has been very chargeable, having kept a very good countenance, and a very good table, all his abode here, and of such credit with all the chief sort, as I know no stranger in any place hath the like. As I am a suitor to you to be his good friend to her Majesty, so I must heartily pray you, good my Lord, to procure his coming hither shortly to me again, for I know not almost how to do without him. I confess it is a wrong to the gentleman, and I protest before God, if it were for mine own particular respect, I would not require it for 5000*l*. But your Lordship doth little think how greatly I have to do, as also how needful for her Majesty's service his being here will be. Wherefore, good my Lord, if it may not offend her Majesty, be a mean for this my request, for her own service' sake wholly."

Such were the personages who surrounded the Earl on his arrival in the Netherlands, and such their sentiments respecting the position that it was desirable for him to assume. But there was one very important fact. He had studiously concealed from Davison that the Queen had peremptorily and distinctly forbidden his accepting the office of governor-

[1] Sidney to Leicester, 22 Nov. 1585. Brit. Mus. Galba, C. viii. 213, MS. Same to same, $\frac{1}{11}$ Feb. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Leicester to Burghley, 27 Dec. 1585. (S. P. Office MS.)

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general. It seemed reasonable, if he came thither at all, that he should come in that elevated capacity. The States wished it. The Earl ardently longed for it. The ambassador, who knew more of Netherland politics and Netherland humours than any man did, approved of it. The interests of both England and Holland seemed to require it. No one but Leicester knew that her Majesty had forbidden it.

Accordingly, no sooner had the bell-ringing, cannon-explosions, bonfires, and charades, come to an end, and the Earl got fairly housed in the Hague, than the States took the affair of government seriously in hand.

On the 9th January, Chancellor Leoninus and Paul Buys waited upon Davison, and requested a copy of the commission granted by the Queen to the Earl. The copy was refused, but the commission was read;[1] by which it appeared that he had received absolute command over her Majesty's forces in the Netherlands by land and sea, together with authority to send for all gentlemen and other personages out of England that he might think useful to him. On the 10th the States passed a resolution to offer him the governor-generalship over all the Provinces. On the same day another committee waited upon his "Excellency"—as the States chose to denominate the Earl, much to the subsequent wrath of the Queen—and made an appointment for the whole body to wait upon him the following morning.[2]

Upon that day accordingly—New Year's Day, by the English reckoning, 11th January by the New Style—the deputies of all the States at an early hour came to his lodgings, with much pomp, preceded by a herald and trumpeters. Leicester, not expecting them quite so soon, was in his dressing-room, getting ready for the solemn audience, when, somewhat to his dismay, a flourish of trumpets announced the arrival of the whole body in his principal hall of audience. Hastening his preparations as much as possible,

$\frac{1}{11}$ Jan. 1586.

[1] Resolutien van de Staten General, 9° 1586. (Hague Archives, MS., $\frac{9}{10}$ Jan. 1586.)

[2] Ibid. Compare Bor. II. 686, *seq.*

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he descended to that apartment, and was instantly saluted by a flourish of rhetoric still more formidable; for that "very great, and wise old Leoninus," forthwith began an oration, which promised to be of portentous length and serious meaning. The Earl was slightly flustered, when, fortunately, some one whispered in his ear that they had come to offer him the much-coveted prize of the stadholderate-general. Thereupon he made bold to interrupt the flow of the chancellor's eloquence in its first outpourings. "As this is a very private matter," said he, "it will be better to treat of it in a more private place. I pray you therefore to come into my chamber, where these things may be more conveniently discussed."[1]

"You hear what my Lord says," cried Leoninus, turning to his companions; "we are to withdraw into his chamber."[2]

Accordingly they withdrew, accompanied by the Earl, and by five or six select counsellors, among whom were Davison and Dr. Clerk. Then the chancellor once more commenced his harangue, and went handsomely through the usual forms of compliment, first to the Queen, and then to her representative, concluding with an earnest request that the Earl—although her Majesty had declined the sovereignty—"would take the name and place of absolute governor and general of all their forces and soldiers, with the disposition of their whole revenues and taxes."[3]

So soon as the oration was concluded, Leicester, who did not speak French, directed Davison to reply in that language.

The envoy accordingly, in name of the Earl, expressed the deepest gratitude for this mark of the affection and confidence of the States-General towards the Queen. He assured them that the step thus taken by them would be the cause of still more favour and affection on the part of her Majesty, who would unquestionably, from day to day, augment the succour that she was extending to the Provinces in order to relieve men from their misery. For himself, the Earl protested that

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' p. 58, $\frac{14}{24}$ Jan. 1586. [2] Ibid.

[3] Bruce, 58, $\frac{14}{24}$ Jan. 1586

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he could never sufficiently recompense the States for the honour which had thus been conferred upon him, even if he should live one hundred lives. Although he felt himself quite unable to sustain the weight of so great an office, yet he declared that they might repose with full confidence on his integrity and good intentions. Nevertheless, as the authority thus offered to him was very arduous, and as the subject required deep deliberation, he requested that the proposition should be reduced to writing, and delivered into his hands. He might then come to a conclusion thereupon, most conducive to the glory of God and the welfare of the land.[1]

Three days afterwards, 14th January, the offer, drawn up formally in writing, was presented to envoy Davison, according to the request of Leicester. Three days latter, 17th January, his Excellency having deliberated upon the proposition, requested a committee of conference.[2] The conference took place the same day, and there was some discussion upon matters of detail, principally relating to the matter of contributions. The Earl, according to the report of the committee, manifested no repugnance to the acceptance of the office, provided these points could be satisfactorily adjusted. He seemed, on the contrary, impatient, rather than reluctant; for, on the day following the conference, he sent his secretary Gilpin with a somewhat importunate message. "His Excellency was surprised," said the secretary, "that the States were so long in coming to a resolution on the matters suggested by him in relation to the offer of the government-general; nor could his Excellency imagine the cause of the delay."[3]

[1] Resol. Stat. General, $\frac{1}{11}$ Jan. 1586. (Hague Archives, MS.) According to the Earl's own account of his speech, through the mouth of Davison, he had much more distinctly expressed his reluctance to accept the authority offered, placing his refusal, not on the ground of unfitness, but on the unexpected nature of the proposition, and upon its "being further than had past in the contract with her Majesty." The account in the text is from the MS. journal of the Sessions of the States General, kept from day to day by the clerk of that assembly.

[2] Resol. Stat. Gen. $\frac{4}{14}$ - $\frac{7}{17}$ Jan. 1586.

[3] Resol. Stat. Gen. $\frac{8}{18}$ Jan. 1586. (MSS.)

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For, in truth, the delay was caused by an excessive, rather than a deficient, appetite for power on the part of his Excellency. The States, while conferring what they called the "absolute" government, by which it afterwards appeared that they meant absolute, in regard to time, not to function —were very properly desirous of retaining a wholesome control over that government by means of the state-council. They wished not only to establish such a council, as a check upon the authority of the new governor, but to share with him at least in the appointment of the members who were to compose the board. But the aristocratic Earl was already restive under the thought of any restraint—most of all the restraint of individuals belonging to what he considered the humbler classes.

"Cousin, my lord ambassador," said he to Davison, "among your sober companions be it always remembered, I beseech you, that your cousin have no other alliance but with gentle blood. By no means consent that he be linked in faster bonds than their absolute grant may yield him a free and honourable government, to be able to do such service as shall be meet for an honest man to perform in such a calling, which of itself is very noble. But yet it is not more to be embraced, if I were to be led in alliance by such keepers as will sooner draw my nose from the right scent of the chace, than to lead my feet in the true pace to pursue the game I desire to reach. Consider, I pray you, therefore, what is to be done, and how unfit it will be in respect of my poor self, and how unacceptable to her Majesty, and how advantageous to enemies that will seek holes in my coat, if I should take so great a name upon me, and so little power. They challenge acceptation already, and I challenge their absolute grant and offer to me, before they spoke of any instructions; for so it was when Leoninus first spoke to me with them all on New Years-Day, as you heard—offering in his speech all manner of absolute authority. If it please them to confirm this, without restraining instructions, I will willingly serve the States, or

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else, with such advising instructions as the Dowager of Hungary had."[1]

This was explicit enough, and Davison, who always acted for Leicester in the negotiations with the States, could certainly have no doubt as to the desires of the Earl, on the subject of "absolute" authority. He did accordingly what he could to bring the States to his Excellency's way of thinking; nor was he unsuccessful.

On the 22nd January, a committee of conference was sent by the States to Leyden, in which city Leicester was making a brief visit. They were instructed to procure his consent, if possible, to the appointment, by the States themselves, of a council consisting of members from each Province. If they could not obtain this concession, they were directed to insist as earnestly as possible upon their right to present a double list of candidates, from which he was to make nominations. And if the one and the other proposition should be refused, the States were then to agree that his Excellency should freely choose and appoint a council of state, consisting of native residents from every Province, for the period of one year. The committee was further authorised to arrange the commission for the governor, in accordance with these points; and to draw up a set of instructions for the state-council, to the satisfaction of his Excellency. The committee was also empowered to conclude the matter at once, without further reference to the States.[2]

Certainly a committee thus instructed was likely to be sufficiently pliant. It had need to be, in order to bend to the humour of his Excellency, which was already becoming imperious. The adulation which he had received, the

[1] Leicester to Davison, $\frac{11}{21}$ Jan. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) Davison answered in the same strain, assuring the Earl that he had taken the Estates well to task for wishing to "prescribe instructions after their grant of an authority absolute," and informing him that they were "very sorry any thing should fall out might justly distaste him." Davison to Leicester, $\frac{12}{22}$ Jan. 1586. Brit. Mus. Galba, C. viii. p. 4, MS. $\frac{14}{24}$ Jan. 1586. See Bruce, p. 59.

[2] Resol. Stat. Gen. $\frac{9}{19}$–$\frac{12}{22}$ Jan. 1586, MS.

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triumphal marches, the Latin orations, the flowers strewn in his path, had produced their effect, and the Earl was almost inclined to assume the airs of royalty. The committee waited upon him at Leyden. He affected a reluctance to accept the "absolute" government, but his coyness could not deceive such experienced statesmen as the "wise old Leoninus," or Menin, Maalzoon, Floris Thin, or Aitzma, who composed the deputation. It was obvious enough to them that it was not a King Log that had descended among them; but it was not a moment for complaining. The governor-elect insisted, of course, that the two Englishmen, according to the treaty with her Majesty, should be members of the council. He also, at once, nominated Leoninus, Meetkerk, Brederode, Falck, and Paul Buys, to the same office; thinking, no doubt, that these were five keepers—if keepers he must have—who would not draw his nose off the scent, nor prevent his reaching the game he hunted, whatever that game might be. It was reserved for the future, however, to show, whether the five were like to hunt in company with him as harmoniously as he hoped. As to the other counsellors, he expressed a willingness that candidates should be proposed for him, as to whose qualifications he would make up his mind at leisure.[1]

This matter being satisfactorily adjusted—and certainly unless the game pursued by the Earl was a crown royal, he ought to have been satisfied with his success—the States received a letter from their committee at Leyden, informing them that his Excellency, after some previous protestations, had accepted the government (24th January, 1586).[2]

It was agreed that he should be inaugurated Governor-General of the United Provinces of Gelderland and Zutphen, Flanders, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, and all others in confederacy with them. He was to have supreme military command by land and sea. He was to exercise supreme authority in matters civil and political, according to the

[1] Resol. Stat. Gen. $\frac{14}{24}$ Jan. 1586, MS. [2] Ibid.

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customs prevalent in the reign of the Emperor Charles V. All officers, political, civil, legal, were to be appointed by him out of a double or triple nomination made by the States of the Provinces in which vacancies might occur. The States-General were to assemble whenever and wherever he should summon them. They were also—as were the States of each separate Province—competent to meet together by their own appointment. The Governor-General was to receive an oath of fidelity from the States, and himself to swear the maintenance of the ancient laws, customs, and privileges of the country.[1]

The deed was done. In vain had an emissary of the French court been exerting his utmost to prevent the consummation of this close alliance. For the wretched government of Henry III., while abasing itself before Philip II., and offering the fair cities and fertile plains of France as a sacrifice to that insatiable ambition which wore the mask of religious bigotry, was most anxious that Holland and England should not escape the meshes by which it was itself enveloped. The agent at the Hague came nominally upon some mercantile affairs, but in reality, according to Leicester, "to impeach the States from binding themselves to her Majesty.[2] But he was informed that there was then no leisure for his affairs, "for the States would attend to the service of the Queen of England, before all princes in the world." The agent did not feel complimented by the coolness of this reception; yet it was reasonable enough, certainly, that the Hollanders should remember with bitterness the contumely which they had experienced the previous year in France. The emissary was, however, much disgusted. "The fellow," said Leicester, "took it in such snuff, that he came proudly to the States, and offered his letters, saying; "Now I trust you have done all your sacrifices to the Queen of England, and may yield me some leisure to read my master's letters." "But they so shook him up," continued the Earl, "for naming her Majesty

[1] Groot Plakaatboek, iv. 81. Bor, II. 686. Wagenaar, viii. 115-117.

[2] Bruce, 47, $\frac{31 \text{ Dec. } 1585}{10 \text{ Jan. } 1585}$.

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in scorn—as they took it—that they hurled him his letters, and bid him content himself;" and so on, much to the agent's discomfiture, who retired in greater "snuff" than ever.[1]

So much for the French influence. And now Leicester had done exactly what the most imperious woman in the world, whose favour was the breath of his life, had expressly forbidden him to do. The step having been taken, the prize so tempting to his ambition having been snatched, and the policy which had governed the united action of the States and himself seeming so sound, what ought he to have done in order to avert the tempest which he must have foreseen? Surely a man who knew so much of woman's nature and of Elizabeth's nature as he did, ought to have attempted to conciliate her affections, after having so deeply wounded her pride. He knew his power. Besides the graces of his person and manner—which few women, once impressed by them, could ever forget—he possessed the most insidious and flattering eloquence, and, in absence, his pen was as wily as his tongue. For the Earl was imbued with the very genius of courtship. None was better skilled than he in the phrases of rapturous devotion, which were music to the ear both of the woman and the Queen; and he knew his royal mistress too well not to be aware that the language of passionate idolatry, however extravagant, had rarely fallen unheeded upon her soul. It was strange therefore, that in this emergency, he should not at once throw himself upon her compassion without any mediator. Yet, on the contrary, he committed the monstrous error of entrusting his defence to envoy Davison, whom he determined to despatch at once with instructions to the Queen, and towards whom he committed the grave offence of concealing from him her previous prohibitions. But how could the Earl fail to perceive that it was the woman, not the Queen, whom he should have implored for pardon; that it was Robert Dudley, not William Davison, who ought to have sued upon his knees. This whole matter of the Netherland

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 47, $\frac{31 \text{ Dec. } 1585}{10 \text{ Jan. } 1586}$.

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sovereignty and the Leicester stadholderate, forms a strange psychological study, which deserves and requires some minuteness of attention; for it was by the characteristics of these eminent personages that the current history was deeply stamped.

Certainly, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the first letter conveying intelligence so likely to pique the pride of Elizabeth, should have been a letter from Leicester. On the contrary, it proved to be a dull formal epistle from the States.

And here again the assistance of the indispensable Davison was considered necessary. On the 3rd February the ambassador—having announced his intention of going to England, by command of his Excellency, so soon as the Earl should have been inaugurated, for the purpose of explaining all these important transactions to her Majesty—waited upon the States with the request that they should prepare as speedily as might be their letter to the Queen, with other necessary documents, to be entrusted to his care. He also suggested that the draft or minute of their proposed epistle should be submitted to him for advice—"because the humours of her Majesty were best known to him."[1] 3 Feb. 1586.

Now the humours of her Majesty were best known to Leicester of all men in the whole world, and it is inconceivable that he should have allowed so many days and weeks to pass without taking these humours properly into account. But the Earl's head was slightly turned by his sudden and unexpected success. The game that he had been pursuing had fallen into his grasp, almost at the very start, and it is not astonishing that he should have been somewhat absorbed in the enjoyment of his victory.

Three days later (6th February) the minute of a letter to Elizabeth, drawn up by Menin, was submitted to the ambassador; eight days after that (14th February) Mr. Davison took leave of the States, and set forth for the Brill on his way to England; and three or four days later yet, he was still in

[1] Resol. Stat. Gen. 3 Feb. 1586, MS.

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that sea-port, waiting for a favourable wind.[1] Thus from the 11th January, N.S., upon which day the first offer of the absolute government had been made to Leicester, nearly forty days had elapsed, during which long period the disobedient Earl had not sent one line, private or official, to her Majesty on this most important subject. And when at last the Queen was to receive information of her favourite's delinquency, it was not to be in his well-known handwriting and accompanied by his penitent tears and written caresses, but to be laid before her with all the formality of parchment and sealing-wax, in the stilted diplomatic jargon of those "highly-mighty, very learned, wise, and very foreseeing gentlemen, my lords the States-General." Nothing could have been managed with less adroitness.

Meantime, not heeding the storm gathering beyond the narrow seas, the new governor was enjoying the full sunshine of power. On the 4th February the ceremony of his inauguration took place, with great pomp and ceremony at the Hague."[2]

4 Feb., 1586.

The beautiful, placid, village-capital of Holland wore much the same aspect at that day as now. Clean, quiet, spacious streets, shaded with rows of whispering poplars and umbrageous limes, broad sleepy canals—those liquid highways along which glided in phantom silence the bustle, and traffic, and countless cares of a stirring population—quaint toppling houses, with tower and gable; ancient brick churches, with slender spire and musical chimes; thatched cottages on the outskirts, with stork-nests on the roofs—the whole without fortification save the watery defences which enclosed it with long-drawn lines on every side; such was the Count's park, or 's Graven Haage, in English called the Hague.

It was embowered and almost buried out of sight by vast groves of oaks and beeches. Ancient Badahuennan forests of sanguinary Druids, the "wild wood without mercy" of Saxon savages, where, at a later period, sovereign Dirks and

[1] Resol. Stat. Gen. 6-20 Feb. 1586, MS.
[2] Resol. Stat. Gen. 4 Feb. 1586, MS.

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Florences, in long succession of centuries, had ridden abroad with lance in rest, or hawk on fist; or under whose boughs, in still nearer days, the gentle Jacqueline had pondered and wept over her sorrows, stretched out in every direction between the city and the neighbouring sea. In the heart of the place stood the ancient palace of the counts, built in the thirteenth century by William II. of Holland, King of the Romans, with massive brick walls, cylindrical turrets, pointed gable and rose-shaped windows, and with spacious court-yard, enclosed by feudal moat, drawbridge, and portcullis.

In the great banqueting-hall of the ancient palace, whose cedarn-roof of magnificent timber-work, brought by crusading counts from the Holy Land, had rung with the echoes of many a gigantic revel in the days of chivalry—an apartment one hundred and fifty feet long and forty feet high—there had been arranged an elevated platform, with a splendid chair of state for the "absolute" governor, and with a great profusion of gilding and velvet tapestry, hangings, gilt emblems, complimentary devices, lions, unicorns, and other imposing appurtenances. Prince Maurice, and all the members of his house, the States-General in full costume, and all the great functionaries, civil and military, were assembled. There was an elaborate harangue by orator Menin, in which it was proved, by copious citations from Holy Writ and from ancient chronicle, that the Lord never forsakes His own; so that now, when the Provinces were at their last gasp by the death of Orange and the loss of Antwerp, the Queen of England and the Earl of Leicester had suddenly descended, as if from Heaven, to their rescue. Then the oaths of mutual fidelity were exchanged between the governor and the States, and, in conclusion, Dr. Bartholomew Clerk ventured to measure himself with the "big fellows," by pronouncing an oration which seemed to command universal approbation. And thus the Earl was duly installed Governor-General of the United States of the Netherlands.[1]

[1] Resol. Stat. Gen. 4 Feb. 1586, MS. Bor, II. 688, 689. Wagenaar, viii. 115, *seq.* Holinshed, iv. 647, *seq.* Stowe, 715, *seq.*

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But already the first mutterings of the storm were audible. A bird in the air had whispered to the Queen that her favourite was inclined to disobedience. "Some flying tale hath been told me here," wrote Leicester to Walsingham, "that her Majesty should mislike my name of Excellency. But if I had delighted, or would have received titles, I refused a title higher than Excellency, as Mr. Davison, if you ask him, will tell you; and that I, my own self, refused most earnestly that, and, if I might have done it, this also."[1] Certainly, if the Queen objected to this common form of address, which had always been bestowed upon Leicester, as he himself observed, ever since she had made him an earl,[2] it might be supposed that her wrath would mount high when she should hear of him as absolute governor-general. It is also difficult to say what higher title he had refused, for certainly the records show that he had refused nothing, in the way of power and dignity, that it was possible for him to obtain.

But very soon afterwards arrived authentic intelligence that the Queen had been informed of the proposition made on New Year's-Day (O. S.), and that, although she could not imagine the possibility of his accepting, she was indignant that he had not peremptorily rejected the offer.

"As to the proposal made to you," wrote Burghley, "by the mouth of Leoninus, her Majesty hath been informed that you had thanked them in her name, and alledged that there was no such thing in the contract, and that therefore you could not accept nor knew how to answer the same."[3]

Now this information was obviously far from correct, although it had been furnished by the Earl himself to Burghley. We have seen that Leicester had by no means rejected, but very gratefully entertained, the proposition as

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 94, $\frac{7}{17}$ Feb. 1586.

[2] Compare Camden, III. 399, "being derided by those that envied him, and the title of Excellency, which of all Englishmen, he was the first that ever used, exploded and tripped off the stage."

[3] Burghley (in his own hand) to Leicester, $\frac{26 \text{ Jan.}}{5 \text{ Feb.}}$ 1586. S. P. Office MS.

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soon as made. Nevertheless the Queen was dissatisfied, even without suspecting that she had been directly disobeyed. "Her Majesty," continued the Lord-Treasurer, "is much offended with this proceeding. She allows not that you should give them thanks, but findeth it very strange that you did not plainly declare to them that they did well know how often her Majesty had refused to have any one for her take any such government there, and that she had always so answered peremptorily. Therefore there might be some suspicion conceived that by offering on their part, and refusal on hers, some further mischief might be secretly hidden by some odd person's device to the hurt of the cause. But in that your Lordship did not flatly say to them that yourself did know her Majesty's mind therein, that she never meant, in this sort, to take the absolute government, she is offended; considering, as she saith, that none knew her determination therein better than yourself. For at your going hence, she did peremptorily charge you not to accept any such title and office; and therefore her straight commandment now is that you shall not accept the same, for she will never assent thereto, nor avow you with any such title."[1]

If Elizabeth was so wrathful, even while supposing that the offer had been gratefully declined, what were likely to be her emotions when she should be informed that it had been gratefully accepted. The Earl already began to tremble at the probable consequences of his mal-adroitness. Grave was the error he had committed in getting himself made governor-general against orders; graver still, perhaps fatal, the blunder of not being swift to confess his fault, and cry for pardon, before other tongues should have time to aggravate his offence. Yet even now he shrank from addressing the Queen in person, but hoped to conjure the rising storm by means of the magic wand of the Lord-Treasurer. He implored his friend's interposition to shield him in the emergency, and begged that at least her Majesty and the lords of council would suspend their judgment until Mr. Davison should

[1] Burghley to Leicester, MS. before cited.

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deliver those messages and explanations with which, fully freighted, he was about to set sail from the Brill.

"If my reasons seem to your wisdoms," said he, "other than such as might well move a true and a faithful careful man to her Majesty to do as I have done, I do desire, for my mistaking offence, to bear the burden of it; to be disavowed with all displeasure and disgrace; a matter of as great reproach and grief as ever can happen to any man." He begged that another person might be sent as soon as possible in his place—protesting, however, by his faith in Christ, that he had done only what he was bound to do by his regard for her Majesty's service—and that when he set foot in the country he had no more expected to be made Governor of the Netherlands than to be made King of Spain.[1] Certainly he had been paying dear for the honour, if honour it was, and he had not intended on setting forth for the Provinces to ruin himself, for the sake of an empty title. His motives—and he was honest, when he so avowed them—were motives of state at least as much as of self-advancement."[2] "I have no cause," he said, "to have played the fool thus far for myself; first, to have her Majesty's displeasure, which no kingdom in the world could make me willingly deserve; next, to undo myself in my later days; to consume all that should have kept me all my life in one half year. But I must thank God for all, and am most heartily grieved at her Majesty's heavy displeasure. I neither desire to live, nor to see my country with it."[3]

And at this bitter thought, he began to sigh like furnace, and to shed the big tears of penitence.

"For if I have not done her Majesty good service at this time," he said, "I shall never hope to do her any, but will withdraw me into some out-corner of the world, where I will languish out the rest of my few—too many—days, praying ever for her Majesty's long and prosperous life, and with this only comfort to live an exile, that this disgrace hath happened

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 96, 97, $\frac{8}{18}$ Feb. 1586.
[2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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for no other cause but for my mere regard for her Majesty's estate."[1]

Having painted this dismal picture of the probable termination to his career—not in the hope of melting Burghley, but of touching the heart of Elizabeth—he proceeded to argue the point in question with much logic and sagacity. He had satisfied himself on his arrival in the Provinces, that, if he did not take the governor-generalship some other person would; and that it certainly was for the interest of her Majesty that her devoted servant, rather than an indifferent person, should be placed in that important position. He maintained that the Queen had intimated to him, in private, her willingness that he should accept the office in question, provided the proposition should come from the States and not from her; he reasoned that the double nature of his functions —being general and counsellor for her, as well as general and counsellor for the Provinces—made his acceptance of the authority conferred on him almost indispensable; that for him to be merely commander over five thousand English troops, when an abler soldier than himself, Sir John Norris, was at their head, was hardly worthy her Majesty's service or himself, and that in reality the Queen had lost nothing, by his appointment, but had gained much benefit and honour by thus having "the whole command of the Provinces, of their forces by land and sea, of their towns and treasures, with knowledge of all their secrets of state."[2]

Then, relapsing into a vein of tender but reproachful melancholy, he observed, that, if it had been any man but himself that had done as he had done, he would have been thanked, not censured. "But such is now my wretched case," he said, "as for my faithful, true, and loving heart to her Majesty and my country, I have utterly undone myself. For favour, I have disgrace; for reward, utter spoil and ruin. But if this taking upon me the name of governor is so evil taken as it hath deserved dishonour, discredit, disfavour, with

[1] Bruce, 98, $\frac{8}{18}$ Feb. 1586. [2] Ibid. 100-102, $\frac{8}{18}$ Feb. 1586.

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all griefs that may be laid upon a man, I must receive it as deserved of God and not of my Queen, whom I have reverenced with all humility, and whom I have loved with all fidelity."[1]

This was the true way, no doubt, to reach the heart of Elizabeth, and Leicester had always plenty of such shafts in his quiver. Unfortunately he had delayed too long, and even now he dared not take a direct aim. He feared to write to the Queen herself, thinking that his so doing, "while she had such conceipts of him, would only trouble her," and he therefore continued to employ the Lord-Treasurer and Mr. Secretary as his mediators. Thus he committed error upon error.

Meantime, as if there had not been procrastination enough, Davison was loitering at the Brill, detained by wind and weather. Two days after the letter, just cited, had been despatched to Walsingham, Leicester sent an impatient message to the envoy. "I am heartily sorry, with all my heart," he said, "to hear of your long stay at Brill, the wind serving so fair as it hath done these two days. I would have laid any wager that you had been in England ere this. I pray you make haste, lest our cause take too great a prejudice there ere you come, although I cannot fear it, because it is so good and honest. I pray you imagine in what care I dwell till I shall hear from you, albeit some way very resolute."[2]

$\frac{10}{20}$ Feb. 1586.

Thus it was obvious that he had no secret despair of his cause when it should be thoroughly laid before the Queen. The wonder was that he had added the offence of long silence to the sin of disobedience. Davison had sailed, however, before the receipt of the Earl's letter. He had been furnished with careful instructions upon the subject of his mission. He was to show how eager the States had been to have Leicester for their absolute governor—which was perfectly true—and how

[1] Bruce, 100-102, just cited.

[2] Leicester to Davison, $\frac{10}{20}$ Feb. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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anxious the Earl had been to decline the proffered honour—which was certainly false, if contemporary record and the minutes of the States-General are to be believed. He was to sketch the general confusion which had descended upon the country, the quarrelling of politicians, and the discontent of officers and soldiers, from out of all which chaos one of two results was sure to arise: the erection of a single chieftain, or a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain. That it would be impossible for the Earl to exercise the double functions with which he was charged—of general of her Majesty's forces, and general and chief counsellor of the States—if any other man than himself should be appointed governor, was obvious. It was equally plain that the Provinces could only be kept at her Majesty's disposition by choosing the course which, at their own suggestion, had been adopted. The offer of the government by the States, and its acceptance by the Earl, were the logical consequence of the step which the Queen had already taken. It was thus only that England could retain her hold upon the country, and even upon the cautionary towns. As to a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain—which would have been the probable result of Leicester's rejection of the proposition made by the States—it was unnecessary to do more than allude to such a catastrophe. No one but a madman could doubt that, in such an event, the subjugation of England was almost certain.[1]

But before the arrival of the ambassador, the Queen had been thoroughly informed as to the whole extent of the Earl's delinquency. Dire was the result. The wintry gales which had been lashing the North Sea, and preventing the unfortunate Davison from setting forth on his disastrous mission, were nothing to the tempest of royal wrath which had been shaking the court-world to its centre. The Queen had been swearing most fearfully ever since she read the news, which Leicester had not dared to communicate directly to herself. No one was allowed to speak a word in extenuation of the

[1] Remembrances for Mr. Davison, in Bruce, 80-82, Feb. 1586.

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favourite's offence. Burghley, who lifted up his voice somewhat feebly to appease her wrath, was bid, with a curse, to hold his peace. So he took to his bed—partly from prudence, partly from gout—and thus sheltered himself for a season from the peltings of the storm. Walsingham, more manful, stood to his post, but could not gain a hearing. It was the culprit that should have spoken, and spoken in time. "Why, why did you not write yourself?" was the plaintive cry of all the Earl's friends, from highest to humblest. "But write to her now," they exclaimed, "at any rate; and, above all, send her a present, a love-gift." "Lay out two or three hundred crowns in some rare thing, for a token to her Majesty," said Christopher Hatton.[1]

Strange that his colleagues and his rivals should have been obliged to advise Leicester upon the proper course to pursue; that they—not himself—should have been the first to perceive that it was the enraged woman, even more than the offended sovereign, who was to be propitiated and soothed. In truth, all the woman had been aroused in Elizabeth's bosom. She was displeased that her favourite should derive power and splendour from any source but her own bounty. She was furious that his wife, whom she hated, was about to share in his honours. For the mischievous tongues of court-ladies had been collecting or fabricating many unpleasant rumours. A swarm of idle but piquant stories had been buzzing about the Queen's ears, and stinging her into a frenzy of jealousy. The Countess—it was said—was on the point of setting forth for the Netherlands, to join the Earl, with a train of courtiers and ladies, coaches and side-saddles, such as were never seen before—where the two were about to establish themselves in conjugal felicity, as well as almost royal state. What a prospect for the jealous and imperious sovereign! "Coaches and side-saddles! She would show the upstarts that there was one Queen, and that her name was Elizabeth, and that there was no court but hers." And so she continued to storm

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 113, 114, $\frac{11}{21}$ Feb. 1586.

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and swear, and threaten unutterable vengeance, till all her courtiers quaked in their shoes.[1]

Thomas Dudley, however, warmly contradicted the report, declaring, of his own knowledge, that the Countess had no wish to go to the Provinces, nor the Earl any intention of receiving her there. This information was at once conveyed to the Queen, "and," said Dudley, "it did greatly pacify her stomach."[2] His friends did what they could to maintain the governor's cause; but Burghley, Walsingham, Hatton, and the rest of them, were all "at their wits' end,"[3] and were nearly distraught at the delay in Davison's arrival. Meantime the Queen's stomach was not so much pacified but that she was determined to humiliate the Earl with the least possible delay. Having waited sufficiently long for his explanations, she now appointed Sir Thomas Heneage as special commissioner to the States, without waiting any longer. Her wrath vented itself at once in the preamble to the instructions for this agent.

"Whereas," she said, "we have been given to understand that the Earl of Leicester hath in a very contemptuous sort—contrary to our express commandment given unto him by ourself, accepted of an offer of a more absolute government made by the States unto him, than was agreed on between us and their commissioners—which kind of contemptible manner of proceeding giveth the world just cause to think that there is not that reverent respect carried towards us by our subjects as in duty appertaineth; especially seeing so notorious a contempt committed by one whom we have raised up and yielded in the eye of the world, even from the beginning of our reign,

1 "It was told her Majesty," wrote Thomas Dudley, "that my lady was prepared presently to come over to your Excellency, with such a train of ladies and gentlewomen, and such rich coaches, litters, and side-saddles, as her Majesty had none such; and that there should be such a court of ladies as should far pass her Majesty's court here. This information (though most false) did not a little stir her Majesty to extreme choler and dislike of all your doings there; saying, with great oaths, she would have no more courts under her obeisance than her own, and would revoke you from thence with all speed. This Mr. Vice-Chamberlain (Hatton) told me in great secret, and afterwards Mr. Secretary, and last of all my Lord Treasurer." Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 112, $\frac{11}{21}$ Feb 1586.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

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as great portion of our favour as ever subject enjoyed at any prince's hands; we therefore, holding nothing dearer than our honour, and considering that no one thing could more touch our reputation than to induce so open and public a faction of a prince, and work a greater reproach than contempt at a subject's hand, without reparation of our honour, have found it necessary to send you unto him, as well to charge him with the said contempt, as also to execute such other things as we think meet to be done, for the justifying of ourselves to the world, as the repairing of the indignity cast upon us by his undutiful manner of proceeding towards us. . . . . And for that we find ourselves also not well dealt withal by the States, in that they have pressed the said Earl, without our assent or privity, to accept of a more absolute government than was agreed on between us and their commissioners, we have also thought meet that you shall charge them therewith, according to the directions hereafter ensuing. And to the end there may be no delay used in the execution of that which we think meet to be presently done, you shall charge the said States, even as they tender the continuance of our good-will towards them, to proceed to the speedy execution of our request."[1]

After this trumpet-like preamble it may be supposed that the blast which followed would be piercing and shrill. The instructions, in truth, consisted in wild, scornful flourishes upon one theme. The word contempt had occurred five times in the brief preamble. It was repeated in almost every line of the instructions.

"You shall let the Earl" (our cousin no longer) "understand," said the Queen, "how highly and justly we are offended with his acceptation of the government, which we do repute to be a very *great and strange contempt*, least looked for at our hands, being, as he is, a creature of our own." His omission to acquaint her by letter with the causes moving him "so *contemptuously* to break" her commandment, his

1 The Queen to Sir Thomas Heneage, $\frac{10}{20}$ Feb. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) The rest of the document is given in Bruce, 105 *seq.*

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delay in sending Davison "to answer the said *contempt*," had much "aggravated the fault," although the Queen protested herself unable to imagine any "excuse for so *manifest a contempt*." The States were to be informed that she "held it strange" that "this creature of her own" should have been pressed by them to "commit so notorious *a contempt*" against her, both on account of this very exhibition of contempt on Leicester's part, and because they thereby "shewed themselves to have a very slender and weak conceit of her judgment, by pressing a minister of hers to accept that which she had refused, as though her long experience in government had not taught her to discover what was fit to do in matters of state." As the result of such a proceeding would be to disgrace her in the eyes of mankind, by inducing an opinion that her published solemn declaration on this great subject had been intended to abuse the world, he was directed—in order to remove the hard conceit justly to be taken by the world, "in consideration of *the said contempt*,"—to make a public and open resignation of the government in the place where he had accepted the same.[1]

Thus it had been made obvious to the unlucky "creature of her own," that the Queen did not easily digest "contempt." Nevertheless these instructions to Heneage were gentle, compared with the fierce billet which she addressed directly to the Earl. It was brief, too, as the posy of a ring; and thus it ran:—"To my Lord of Leicester, from the Queen, by Sir Thomas Heneage. How contemptuously we conceive ourself to have been used by you, you shall by this bearer understand, whom we have expressly sent unto you to charge you withal. We could never have imagined, had we not seen it fall out in experience, that a man raised up by ourself, and extraordinarily favoured by us above any other subject of this land, would have, in so contemptible a sort, broken our commandment, in a cause that so greatly toucheth us in honour; whereof, although you have showed yourself to make but little account, in most undutiful a sort, you may not therefore think

[1] The Queen to Sir Thomas Heneage, just cited.

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that we have so little care of the reparation thereof as we mind to pass so great a wrong in silence unredressed. And therefore our express pleasure and commandment is, that—all delays and excuses laid apart—you do presently, upon the duty of your allegiance, obey and fulfil whatsoever the bearer hereof shall direct you to do in our name. Whereof fail not, as you will answer the contrary at your uttermost peril."[1]

Here was no billing and cooing, certainly, but a terse, biting phraseology, about which there could be no misconception.

By the same messenger the Queen also sent a formal letter to the States-General; the epistle—*mutatis mutandis*—being also addressed to the state-council.

In this document her Majesty expressed her great surprise that Leicester should have accepted their offer of the absolute government, "both for police and war," when she had so expressly rejected it herself. "To tell the truth," she observed, "you seem to have treated us with very little respect, and put a too manifest insult upon us, in presenting anew to one of our subjects the same proposition which we had already declined, without at least waiting for our answer whether we should like it or no; as if we had not sense enough to be able to decide upon what we ought to accept or refuse."[2] She proceeded to express her dissatisfaction with the course pursued, because so repugnant to her published declaration, in which she had stated to the world her intention of aiding the Provinces, without meddling in the least with the sovereignty of the country. "The contrary would now be believed," she said, "at least by those who take the liberty of censuring, according to their pleasure, the actions of princes." Thus her honour was at stake. She signified her will, therefore, that, in order to convince the world of her sincerity, the authority conferred should be revoked, and that "the Earl," whom she had decided to recall very soon,[3] should, during his brief residence

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 110, $\frac{10}{20}$ Feb. 1586. S. P. Office, $\frac{10 \text{ and } 14}{20 \quad 24}$ Feb. 1586, MS.

[2] Minute to the States General: the like to the Council of State—*mutatis mutandis*. (S. P. Office MS., Feb. $\frac{13}{23}$ 1585.)

[3] "Lequel sommes deliberée de rappeller bientôt," &c. MS. *ubi sup.*

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there, only exercise the power agreed upon by the original contract. She warmly reiterated her intention, however, of observing inviolably the promise of assistance which she had given to the States. "And if," she said, "any malicious or turbulent spirits should endeavour, perchance, to persuade the people that this our refusal proceeds from lack of affection or honest disposition to assist you—instead of being founded only on respect for our honour, which is dearer to us than life—we beg you, by every possible means, to shut their mouths, and prevent their pernicious designs."[1]

Thus, heavily laden with the royal wrath, Heneage was on the point of leaving London for the Netherlands, on the very day upon which Davison arrived, charged with deprecatory missives from that country. After his long detention he had a short passage, crossing from the Brill to Margate in a single night. Coming immediately to London, he sent to Walsingham to inquire which way the wind was blowing at court, but received a somewhat discouraging reply. "Your long detention by his Lordship," said the Secretary, "has wounded the whole cause;" adding, that he thought her Majesty would not speak with him. On the other hand, it seemed indispensable for him to go to the court, because if the Queen should hear of his arrival before he had presented himself, she was likely to be more angry than ever.[2]

So, the same afternoon, Davison waited upon Walsingham, and found him in a state of despondency. "She takes his Lordship's acceptance of the government most haynously," said Sir Francis, "and has resolved to send Sir Thomas Heneage at once, with orders for him to resign the office. She has been threatening you and Sir Philip Sidney, whom she considers the chief actors and persuaders in the matter, according to information received from some persons about my Lord of Leicester."[3]

Davison protested himself amazed at the Secretary's dis-

[1] "Vous taschiez par tous moyens de cloire la bouche et empecher les pernicieux desseins de tel dangereux instruments," &c. (Ibid.)

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 117, 118, $\frac{11}{21}$ Feb. 1586.

[3] Ibid.

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course, and at once took great pains to show the reasons by which all parties had been influenced in the matter of the government. He declared roundly that if the Queen should carry out her present intentions, the Earl would be most unworthily disgraced, the cause utterly overthrown, the Queen's honour perpetually stained, and that her kingdom would incur great disaster.

Directly after this brief conversation, Walsingham went up stairs to the Queen, while Davison proceeded to the apartments of Sir Christopher Hatton. Thence he was soon summoned to the royal presence, and found that he had not been misinformed as to the temper of her Majesty. The Queen was indeed in a passion, and began swearing at Davison so soon as he got into the chamber; abusing Leicester for having accepted the offer of the States, against her many times repeated commandment, and the ambassador for not having opposed his course. The thing had been done, she said, in contempt of her, as if her consent had been of no consequence, or as if the matter in no way concerned her.

So soon as she paused to take breath, the envoy modestly, but firmly, appealed to her reason, that she would at any rate lend him a patient and favourable ear, in which case he doubted not that she would form a more favourable opinion of the case than she had hitherto done. He then entered into a long discourse upon the state of the Netherlands before the arrival of Leicester, the inclination in many quarters for a peace, the "despair that any sound and good fruit would grow of her Majesty's cold beginning," the general unpopularity of the States' government, the "corruption, partiality, and confusion," which were visible everywhere, the perilous condition of the whole cause, and the absolute necessity of some immediate reform.

"It was necessary," said Davison, "that some one person of wisdom and authority should take the helm. Among the Netherlanders none was qualified for such a charge. Lord Maurice is a child, poor, and of but little respect among them. Elector Truchsess, Count Hohenlo, Meurs, and the

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rest, strangers and incapable of the burden. These considerations influenced the States to the step which had been taken, without which all the rest of her benevolence was to little purpose." Although the contract between the commissioners and the Queen had not literally provided for such an arrangement, yet it had always been contemplated by the States, who had left themselves without a head until the arrival of the Earl.

"Under one pretext or another," continued the envoy, "my Lord of Leicester had long delayed to satisfy them,"—(and in so stating he went somewhat further in defence of his absent friend than the facts would warrant), "for he neither flatly refused it, nor was willing to accept, until your Majesty's pleasure should be known."[1] Certainly the records show no reservation of his acceptance until the Queen had been consulted; but the defence by Davison of the offending Earl was so much the more courageous.

"At length, wearied by their importunity, moved with their reasons, and compelled by necessity, he thought it better to take the course he did," proceeded the diplomatist, "for otherwise he must have been an eye-witness of the dismemberment of the whole country, which could not be kept together but by a reposed hope in her Majesty's found favour, which had been utterly despaired of by his refusal. He thought it better by accepting to increase the honour, profit, and surety, of her Majesty, and the good of the cause, than, by refusing, to utterly hazard the one, and overthrow the other."[2]

To all this and more, well and warmly urged by Davison, the Queen listened by fits and starts, often interrupting his discourse by violent abuse of Leicester, accusing him of contempt for her, charging him with thinking more of his own particular greatness than of her honour and service, and then "digressing into old griefs," said the envoy, "too long and tedious to write." She vehemently denounced Davison also for dereliction of duty in not opposing the measure; but he

[1] Bruce, 120, same date.

[2] Ibid.

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manfully declared that he never deemed so meanly of her Majesty or of his Lordship as to suppose that she would send him, or that he would go to the Provinces, merely "to take command of the relics of Mr. Norris's worn and decayed troops." Such a change, protested Davison, was utterly unworthy a person of the Earl's quality, and utterly unsuited to the necessity of the time and state.[1]

But Davison went farther in defence of Leicester. He had been present at many of the conferences with the Netherland envoys during the preceding summer in England, and he now told the Queen stoutly to her face that she herself, or at any rate one of her chief counsellors, in her hearing and his, had expressed her royal determination not to prevent the acceptance of whatever authority the states might choose to confer, by any one whom she might choose to send. She had declined to accept it in person, but she had been willing that it should be wielded by her deputy; and this remembrance of his had been confirmed by that of one of the commissioners since their return. She had never—Davison maintained—sent him one single line having any bearing on the subject. Under such circumstances, "I might have been accused of madness," said he, "to have dissuaded an action in my poor opinion so necessary and expedient for your Majesty's honour, surety, and greatness." If it were to do over again, he avowed, and "were his opinion demanded, he could give no other advice than that which he had given, having received no contrary commandment from her Highness."[2]

And so ended the first evening's long and vehement debate, and Davison departed, "leaving her," as he said, "much qualified, though in many points unsatisfied."[3] She had however, absolutely refused to receive a letter from Leicester, with which he had been charged, but which, in her opinion, had better have been written two months before.

The next day, it seemed, after all, that Heneage was to be despatched, "in great heat," upon his mission. Davison accordingly requested an immediate audience. So soon as

[1] Bruce, 121, same date. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid. 122, same date.

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admitted to the presence he burst into tears, and implored the Queen to pause before she should inflict the contemplated disgrace on one whom she had hitherto so highly esteemed, and, by so doing, dishonour herself and imperil both countries. But the Queen was more furious than ever that morning, returning at every pause in the envoy's discourse to harp upon the one string—"How dared he come to such a decision without at least imparting it to me?"—and so on, as so many times before. And again Davison, with all the eloquence and with every soothing art he had at command, essayed to pour oil upon the waves. Nor was he entirely unsuccessful; for presently the Queen became so calm again that he ventured once more to present the rejected letter of the Earl. She broke the seal, and at sight of the well-known handwriting she became still more gentle, and so soon as she had read the first of her favourite's honied phrases she thrust the precious document into her pocket, in order to read it afterwards, as Davison observed, at her leisure.[1]

The opening thus successfully made, and the envoy having thus, "by many insinuations," prepared her to lend him a "more patient and willing ear than she had vouchsafed before," he again entered into a skilful and impassioned argument to show the entire wisdom of the course pursued by the Earl.[2]

It is unnecessary to repeat the conversation. Suffice to say that no man could have more eloquently and faithfully supported an absent friend under difficulties than Davison now defended the Earl. The line of argument is already familiar to the reader, and, in truth, the Queen had nothing to reply, save to insist upon the governor's delinquency in maintaining so long and inexplicable a silence. And at this thought, in spite of the envoy's eloquence, she went off again

[1] Bruce, 122, $\frac{17}{27}$ Feb. 1586.

[2] Ibid. "The beginning of our comedy was uncommon sharp," said Davison, "but this much I do be bold to assure you, that if I had not arrived as I did, both his Lordship had been utterly disowned and the cause overthrown." Davison to Herle, 17 Feb. 1586. (Brit. Mus. Galba, C. viii. 33, MS.)

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in a paroxysm of anger, abusing the Earl, and deeply censuring Davison for his "peremptory and partial dealing."[1]

"I had conceived a better opinion of you," she said, "and I had intended more good to you than I now find you worthy of."

"I humbly thank your Highness," replied the ambassador, "but I take yourself to witness that I have never affected or sought any such grace at your hands. And if your Majesty persists in the dangerous course on which you are now entering, I only pray your leave, in recompense for all my travails, to retire myself home, where I may spend the rest of my life in praying for you, whom Salvation itself is not able to save, if these purposes are continued. Henceforth, Madam, he is to be deemed happiest who is least interested in the public service."[2]

And so ended the second day's debate. The next morning the Lord-Treasurer, who, according to Davison, employed himself diligently—as did also Walsingham and Hatton[3]—in dissuading the Queen from the violent measures which she had resolved upon, effected so much of a change as to procure the insertion of those qualifying clauses in Heneage's instructions which had been previously disallowed. The open and public disgrace of the Earl, which was to have been peremptorily demanded, was now to be deferred, if such a measure seemed detrimental to the public service. Her Majesty, however, protested herself as deeply offended as ever, although she had consented to address a brief, somewhat mysterious, but benignant letter of compliment to the States.[4]

[1] Bruce, 123, same date.

[2] Ibid. 124, same date.

[3] Ibid. 143, $\frac{28 \text{ Feb.}}{10 \text{ Mar.}}$ 1586; but to Walsingham Leicester "owed more," according to Davison, "for his constant friendship and sufferance for his sake than to all others at court." Davison to Herle. (Brit. Mus. Galba, C. viii. MS.)

[4] "Monsieur Davison nous a bien au long discouru et representé," said the Queen, "de quel zele vous avez été pousses a faire l'offre du gouvernement absolu de ces pays la au Comte de Leycestre, avec les plus grandes signes et demonstrations d'une vehemente et devotionnee affection envers nous, qu'on scauroit desirer, dont on nous pourroit à bon droit taxer d'ingratitude, si eussions oublié de vous

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Soon after this Davison retired for a few days from the court, having previously written to the Earl that "the heat of her Majesty's offence to his Lordship was abating every day somewhat, and that she was disposed both to hear and to speak more temperately of him."[1]

He implored him accordingly to a "more diligent entertaining of her by wise letters and messages, wherein his slackness hitherto appeared to have bred a great part of this unkindness."[2] He observed also that the "traffic of peace was still going on underhand; but whether to use it as a second string to our bow, if the first should fail, or of any settled inclination thereunto, he could not affirm."[3]

Meantime Sir Thomas Heneage was despatched on his mission to the States, despite all the arguments and expostulations of Walsingham, Burghley, Hatton, and Davison. All the Queen's counsellors were unequivocally in favour of sustaining Leicester; and Heneage was not a little embarrassed as to the proper method of conducting the affair. Everything, in truth, was in a most confused condition. He hardly understood to what power he was accredited. "Heneage writes even now unto me," said Walsingham to Davison, "that he cannot yet receive any information who be the States, which he thinketh will be a great maimer unto him in his negotiation. I have told him that it is an assembly much like that of our burgesses that represent the State, and that my Lord of Leicester may cause some of them to meet together, unto whom he may deliver his letters and messages."[4] Thus the new envoy was to request the culprit to summon the very assembly by which his downfall and dis-

en remercier bien expressement, et de vous rendre certains des effects reciproques que cela cause en nous d'une entiere affection envers vous, combien que pour plusieurs grandes et importantes considerations ne puissons nous accorder a l'acceptation du dit offre. .... Nous asseurant que si scaviez de quelle consequence sont les raisons et considerations *que ne nous pouvons communiquer pour plusieurs respects d'importance*, et sur les quelles notre repos est fondé, *vous memes seriez de notre advis*, et demeureriez contents du dict refus, lequel sera cause d'augmenter encores de tant plus le soin qu'avons promis d'avoir du bien et conversation de ces pays la." Minute of H. Majesty's Letter to the States General. (S. P. Office MS. Feb. 1581.)

[1] Bruce, 124, $\frac{17}{27}$ Feb. 1586.

[2] Ibid. 125, same date.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Walsingham to Davison, 25 Feb 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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grace were to be solemnized, as formally as had been so recently his elevation to the height of power. The prospect was not an agreeable one, and the less so because of his general want of familiarity with the constitutional forms of the country he was about to visit. Davison accordingly, at the request of Sir Francis, furnished Heneage with much valuable information and advice upon the subject.[1]

[1] "The government as it is now," said he, "you shall find altered from the form whereof I delivered you some notes the last year. The general commandment rests presently in the hands of my Lord of Leicester, as governor of the countries for them, over and besides his lieutenancy from the Queen. The nature of his authority reaches to an absolute command in matters belonging to the wars, though in civil things limited to the lawful power of other governors-general in times past, as you shall better perceive by the commission and acts themselves, which I know my Lord will not conceal from you. The contributions towards the war of 200,000 florins, or 20,000*l.* the month, agreed to by the four provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Utrecht, are to be levied chiefly on the ordinary means of consumption, or things spent and consumed in the country, which in Holland alone, doth now amount to 90,000 florins monthly, besides the quota of the other provinces, and over and above their customs upon all merchandize going out and coming in, and, besides, all this may be levied in the other provinces of Gelderland, Overyssel, Brabant and Flanders. They are to put into my Lord's hands the letting and farming of these impositions yet in force till April next, which, coming short of the general sum, they have promised to supply by a contribution extraordinary, such as tax on land and other things, whereof my Lord can and will thoroughly inform you. The sovereignty, notwithstanding, remains *penes ordines*, which we call the Estates. These consist of the whole provinces united, to the number ordinarily of some eighteen or twenty persons, each province deputing some four or five, as the occasion and time require. These are chosen out by their provinces, and are sent to the general assembly upon extraordinary occasions—as when there is occasion for making some new ordinance, either for contributions or other occurrences, concerning the whole generality. The place of their ordinary meeting is the Hague. The time of their continuance together is not longer than till the matter in question be resolved, or remitted to a new report, which often happeneth. These having remained together upon my Lord's coming till he had agreed to the acceptance of the government, were to depart home—about the time of my coming thence—to return within some few days after for the determining of a new proposition for the increase of their ordinary contributions, and are by this time, I think, dissolved again. In this case, your letters to them—*if you have any*—must tarry a new convocation, for to them only it appertains to answer the matter of my Lord's election, forasmuch as concerneth the country. The council of estate, resident with my Lord, hath been chosen since his election to the government, composed of some ten or twelve persons, at the denomination of the provinces, and my Lord's election. These you shall find attending upon my Lord as his ordinary assistants in all matters concerning the public government, but to them it belongeth not to deliver anything touching this case of my Lord's without special direction. And thus much touching the form of that government, as far forth as the time will suffer me to discourse unto you, or may belong to your present charge, leaving you for other things to be more particularly satisfied by Sir Philip Sidney, Mr. Killigrew, and others of your friends, at your arrival there."

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Thus provided with information, forewarned of danger, furnished with a double set of letters from the Queen to the States—the first expressed in language of extreme exasperation, the others couched in almost affectionate terms—and laden with messages brimfull of wrathful denunciation from her Majesty to one who was notoriously her Majesty's dearly-beloved, Sir Thomas Heneage set forth on his mission. These were perilous times for the Davisons and the Heneages, when even Leicesters and Burghleys were scarcely secure.

Meantime the fair weather at court could not be depended upon from one day to another, and the clouds were perpetually returning after the rain.

"Since my second and third day's audience," said Davison, "the storms I met with at my arrival have overblown and abated daily. On Saturday again she fell into some new heat, which lasted not long. This day I was myself at the court, and found her in reasonable good terms, though she will not yet seem satisfied to me either with the matter or manner of your proceeding, notwithstanding all the labour I have taken in that behalf. Yet I find not her Majesty altogether so sharp as some men look, though her favour has outwardly cooled in respect both of this action and of our plain proceeding with her here in defence thereof."[1]

The poor Countess—whose imaginary exodus, with the long

Having given this correct and graphic outline of the government to which Heneage had thus been despatched, upon such delicate and perilous business, Davison proceeded to whisper a word of timely caution in his ear.

"I cannot but let you know," he said, "how heartily sorry I am that it is not more plausible to my Lord, and profitable to that poor country. What may move her Majesty to take this course I know not; but this I protest unto you before God, that I know not what other course the Estates or my Lord might have taken than they have done, nor how the country may be saved, if this act be discountenanced and overthrown. To advise you how to carry yourself I will not take upon me, and yet dare be bold to affirm this much, that your message, if it be not all the better handled in your wisdom, cannot but breed utter dishonour to my Lord, ruin to the cause, and repentance ere long to her Majesty's self, which will better appear unto you when you shall be there to look into their estate. But seeing God hath so disposed thereof, I will cast my care upon his providence, and recommend the cause to Him that governs all." Davison to Heneage, 26 Feb. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 142, $\frac{28\text{ Feb.}}{18\text{ Mar.}}$ 1586.

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procession of coaches and side-saddles, had excited so much ire—found herself in a most distressing position. "I have not seen my Lady these ten or twelve days," said Davison. "To-morrow I hope to do my duty towards her. I found her greatly troubled with tempestuous news she received from court, but somewhat comforted when she understood how I had proceeded with her Majesty. . . . . But these passions overblown, I hope her Majesty will have a gracious regard both towards myself and the cause."[1]

But the passions seemed not likely to blow over so soon as was desirable. Leicester's brother the Earl of Warwick took a most gloomy view of the whole transaction, and hoarser than the raven's was his boding tone.

"Well, our mistress's extreme rage doth increase rather than diminish," he wrote, "and she giveth out great threatening words against you. Therefore make the best assurance you can for yourself, and trust not her oath, for that her malice is great and unquenchable in the wisest of their opinions here, and as for other friendships, as far as I can learn, it is as doubtful as the other. Wherefore, my good brother, repose your whole trust in God, and He will defend you in despite of all your enemies. And let this be a great comfort to you, and so it is likewise to myself and all your assured friends, and that is, that you were never so honoured and loved in your life amongst all good people as you are at this day, only for dealing so nobly and wisely in this action as you have done; so that, whatsoever cometh of it, you have done your part. I praise God from my heart for it. Once again, have great care of yourself, I mean for your safety, and if she will needs revoke you, to the overthrowing of the cause, if I were as you, if I could not be assured *there, I would go to the farthest part of Christendom rather than* ever come into England again. Take heed whom you trust, for that *you have some false boys about you.*"[2]

And the false boys were busy enough, and seemed likely

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 144. MS. just cited.

[2] Ibid. 150, 151, $\frac{6}{16}$ March, 1586.

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to triumph in the result of their schemes. For a glance into the secret correspondence of Mary of Scotland has already revealed the Earl to us constantly surrounded by men in masks. Many of those nearest his person, and of highest credit out of England, were his deadly foes, sworn to compass his dishonour, his confusion, and eventually his death, and in correspondence with his most powerful adversaries at home and abroad. Certainly his path was slippery and perilous along those icy summits of power, and he had need to look well to his footsteps.

Before Heneage had arrived in the Netherlands, Sir Thomas Shirley, despatched by Leicester to England with a commission to procure supplies for the famishing soldiers, and, if possible, to mitigate the Queen's wrath, had been admitted more than once to her Majesty's presence. He had fought the Earl's battle as manfully as Davison had done, and, like that envoy, had received nothing in exchange for his plausible arguments but bitter words and big oaths. Eight days after his arrival he was introduced by Hatton into the privy chamber, and at the moment of his entrance was received with a volley of execrations.[1]

"I did expressly and peremptorily forbid his acceptance of the absolute government, in the hearing of divers of my council," said the Queen.

Shirley.—"The necessity of the case was imminent, your Highness. It was his Lordship's intent to do all for your Majesty's service. Those countries did expect him as a governor at his first landing, and the States durst do no other than satisfy the people also with that opinion. The people's mislike of their present government is such and so great as that the name of States is grown odious amongst them. Therefore the States, doubting the furious rage of the people, conferred the authority upon his Lordship with incessant suit to him to receive it. Notwithstanding this, however, he did deny it until he saw plainly both confusion and ruin of that

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 172, $\frac{14}{24}$ March, 1586.

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country if he should refuse. On the other hand, when he had seen into their estates, his lordship found great profit and commodity like to come unto your Majesty by your acceptance of it. Your Highness may now have garrisons of English in as many towns as pleaseth you, without any more charge than you are now at. Nor can any peace be made with Spain at any time hereafter, but through you and by you. Your Majesty should remember, likewise, that if a man of another nation had been chosen governor it might have wrought great danger. Moreover it would have been an indignity that your lieutenant-general should of necessity be under him that so should have been elected. Finally, this is a stop to any other that may affect the place of government there."

Queen (who has manifested many signs of impatience during this discourse).—"Your speech is all in vain. His Lordship's proceeding is sufficient to make me infamous to all princes, having protested the contrary, as I have done, in a book which is translated into divers and sundry languages. His Lordship, being my servant, a creature of my own, ought not, in duty towards me, have entered into this course without my knowledge and good allowance."

Shirley.—"But the world hath conceived a high judgment of your Majesty's great wisdom and providence, shown by your assailing the King of Spain at one time both in the Low Countries and also by Sir Francis Drake. I do assure myself that the same judgment which did first cause you to take this in hand must continue a certain knowledge in your Majesty that one of these actions must needs stand much better by the other. If Sir Frances do prosper, then all is well. And though he should not prosper, yet this hold that his Lordship hath taken for you on the Low Countries must always assure an honourable peace at your Highness's pleasure. I beseech your Majesty to remember that to the King of Spain the government of his Lordship is no greater matter than if he were but your lieutenant-general there; but the voyage of Sir Francis is of much greater offence than all."

Queen (interrupting).—"I can very well answer for Sir

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Francis. Moreover, if need be, the gentleman careth not if I should disavow him."

Shirley.—"Even so standeth my Lord, if your disavowing of him may also stand with your Highness's favour towards him. Nevertheless, should this bruit of your mislike of his Lordship's authority there come unto the ears of those people—being a nation both sudden and suspicious, and having been heretofore used to stratagem—I fear it may work some strange notion in them, considering that, at this time, there is an increase of taxation raised upon them, the bestowing whereof perchance they know not of. His Lordship's giving up of the government may leave them altogether without government, and in worse case than they were ever in before. For *now the authority of the States is dissolved, and his Lordship's government is the only thing that holdeth them together.* I do beseech your Highness, then, to consider well of it, and if there be any private cause for which you take grief against his Lordship, nevertheless, to have regard unto the public cause, and to have a care of your own safety, which in many wise men's opinions, standeth much upon the good maintenance and upholding of this matter."

Queen.—"I believe nothing of what you say concerning the dissolving of the authority of the States. I know well enough that the States do remain states still. I mean not to do harm to the cause, but only to reform that which his Lordship hath done beyond his warrant from me."[1]

And with this the Queen swept suddenly from the apartment. Sir Thomas, at different stages of the conversation, had in vain besought her to accept a letter from the Earl which had been entrusted to his care. She obstinately refused to touch it. Shirley had even had recourse to stratagem: affecting ignorance on many points concerning which the Queen desired information, and suggesting that doubtless she would find those matters fully explained in his Lordship's letter.[2] The artifice was in vain, and the discussion was, on

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 171-176, $\frac{14}{24}$ March, 1586. [2] Ibid.

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the whole, unsatisfactory. Yet there is no doubt that the Queen had had the worst of the argument, and she was far too sagacious a politician not to feel the weight of that which had been urged so often in defence of the course pursued. But it was with her partly a matter of temper and offended pride, perhaps even of wounded affection.

On the following morning Shirley saw the Queen walking in the garden of the palace, and made bold to accost her. Thinking, as he said, "to test her affection to Lord Leicester by another means," the artful Sir Thomas stepped up to her, and observed that his Lordship was seriously ill. "It is feared," he said, "that the Earl is again attacked by the disease of which Dr. Goodrowse did once cure him. Wherefore his Lordship is now a humble suitor to your Highness that it would please you to spare Goodrowse, and give him leave to go thither for some time."

The Queen was instantly touched.

"Certainly—with all my heart, with all my heart, he shall have him," she replied, "and sorry I am that his Lordship hath that need of him."

"And indeed," returned sly Sir Thomas, "your Highness is a very gracious prince, who are pleased not to suffer his Lordship to perish in health, though otherwise you remain deeply offended with him."

"You know my mind," returned Elizabeth, now all the queen again, and perhaps suspecting the trick; "I may not endure that any man should alter my commission and the authority that I gave him, upon his own fancies and without me."

With this she instantly summoned one of her gentlemen, in order to break off the interview, fearing that Shirley was about to enter again upon a discussion of the whole subject, and again to attempt the delivery of the Earl's letter.[1]

In all this there was much of superannuated coquetry, no doubt, and much of Tudor despotism, but there was also a strong infusion of artifice. For it will soon be necessary to

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 175, 176, same date.

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direct attention to certain secret transactions of an important nature in which the Queen was engaged, and which were even hidden from the all-seeing eye of Walsingham—although shrewdly suspected both by that statesman and by Leicester—but which were most influential in modifying her policy at that moment towards the Netherlands.

There could be no doubt, however, of the stanch and strenuous manner in which the delinquent Earl was supported by his confidential messengers and by some of his fellow-councillors. His true friends were urgent that the great cause in which he was engaged should be forwarded sincerely and without delay. Shirley had been sent for money; but to draw money from Elizabeth was like coining her life-blood, drachma by drachma.

"Your Lordship is like to have but a poor supply of money at this time," said Sir Thomas. "To be plain with you, I fear she groweth weary of the charge, and will hardly be brought to deal thoroughly in the action."

He was also more explicit than he might have been—had he been better informed as to the disposition of the chief personages of the court, concerning whose temper the absent Earl was naturally anxious. Hatton was most in favour at the moment, and it was through Hatton that the communications upon Netherland matters passed; "for," said Shirley, "she will hardly endure Mr. Secretary (Walsingham) to speak unto her therein."

"And truly, my Lord," he continued, "as Mr. Secretary is a noble, good, and true friend unto you, so doth Mr. Vice-Chamberlain show himself an honourable, true, and faithful gentleman, and doth carefully and most like a good friend for your Lordship."

And thus very succinctly and graphically had the envoy painted the situation to his principal. "Your Lordship now sees things just as they stand," he moralized. "Your Lordship is exceeding wise. *You know the Queen and her nature best of any man.* You know all men here. Your Lordship can judge the sequel by this that you see: only this I must tell

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your Lordship, I perceive that fears and doubts from thence are like to work better effects here than comforts and assurance. I think it my part to send your Lordship this as it is, rather than to be silent."[1]

And with these rather ominous insinuations the envoy concluded for the time his narrative.

While these storms were blowing and "overblowing" in England, Leicester remained greatly embarrassed and anxious in Holland. He had sown the wind more extensively than he had dreamed of when accepting the government, and he was now awaiting, with much trepidation, the usual harvest. And we have seen that it was rapidly ripening. Meantime, the good which he had really effected in the Provinces by the course he had taken was likely to be neutralized by the sinister rumours as to his impending disgrace, while the enemy was proportionally encouraged. "I understand credibly," he said, "that the Prince of Parma feels himself in great jollity that her Majesty doth rather mislike than allow of our doings here, which, if it be true, let her be sure her own sweet self shall first smart."[2]

Moreover, the English troops were, as we have seen, mere shoeless, shivering, starving vagabonds. The Earl had generously advanced very large sums of money from his own pocket to relieve their necessity. The States, on the other hand, had voluntarily increased the monthly contribution of 200,000 florins, to which their contract with Elizabeth obliged them,[3] and were more disposed than ever they had been since the

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' just cited.

[2] Bruce, 148, $\frac{3}{13}$ March, 1586.

[3] "They have, I say, added," wrote Lord North to Lord Burghley, "to their first offer as much more, which amounteth to at least forty thousand pounds a month." 28 Feb. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

But he seems to have much overstated the amount. The regular contribution of the States was twenty thousand pounds (or 200,000 florins, as it was then always reckoned) a month, and they had recently granted, at Leicester's urgent request, an additional sum of forty thousand pounds (400,000 florins) for four months, making thirty thousand pounds a month. It is however quite impossible to ascertain at this day the exact sums voted or collected in the republic for war-expenses, although there is no doubt that their efforts were enormous. Comp. Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 135, $\frac{21 \text{ Feb.}}{6 \text{ Mar.}}$ 1586.

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death of Orange to proceed vigorously and harmoniously against the common enemy of Christendom. Under such circumstances it may well be imagined that there was cause on Leicester's part for deep mortification at the tragical turn which the Queen's temper seemed to be taking.

"I know not," he said, "how her Majesty doth mean to dispose of me. It hath grieved me more than I can express that for faithful and good service she should so deeply conceive against me. God knows with what mind I have served her Highness, and perhaps some others might have failed. Yet she is neither tied one jot by covenant or promise by me in any way, nor at one groat the more charges, but myself two or three thousand pounds sterling more than now is like to be well spent. I will desire no partial speech in my favour. If my doings be ill for her Majesty and the realm, let me feel the smart of it. The cause is now well forward; let not her majesty suffer it to quail. If you will have it proceed to good effect, send away Sir William Pelham with all the haste you can. I mean not to complain, but with so weighty a cause as this is, few men have been so weakly assisted. Her Majesty hath far better choice for my place, and with any that may succeed me let Sir William Pelham be first that may come. I speak from my soul for her Majesty's service. I am for myself upon an hour's warning to obey her good pleasure."[1]

Thus far the Earl had maintained his dignity. He had yielded to the solicitations of the States, and had thereby exceeded his commission, and gratified his ambition, but he had in no wise forfeited his self-respect.

But—so soon as the first unquestionable intelligence of the passion to which the Queen had given way at his misdoings reached him—he began to whimper. The straightforward tone which Davison had adopted in his interviews with Elizabeth, and the firmness with which he had defended the cause of his

[1] Leicester to Burghley, 18 Feb. 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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absent friend, at a moment when he had plunged himself into disgrace, was worthy of applause. He deserved at least a word of honest thanks.

Ignoble however was the demeanor of the Earl towards the man—for whom he had but recently been unable to invent eulogies sufficiently warm—so soon as he conceived the possibility of sacrificing his friend as the scape-goat for his own fault. An honest schoolboy would have scorned to leave thus in the lurch a comrade who had been fighting his battles so honestly.

"How earnest I was," he wrote to the lords of the council, 9th March, 1586, "not only to acquaint her Majesty, but immediately upon the first motion made by the States, to send Mr. Davison over to her with letters, I doubt not but he will truly affirm for me; yea, and how far against my will it was, notwithstanding any reasons delivered me, that he and others persisted in, to have me accept first of this place. . . . . The extremity of the case, and my being persuaded that Mr. Davison might have better satisfied her Majesty, *than I perceive he can*, caused me—neither arrogantly nor contemptuously, but even merely and faithfully—to do her Majesty the best service."[1]

He acknowledged, certainly, that Davison had been influenced by honest motives, although his importunities had been the real cause of the Earl's neglect of his own obligations. But he protested that he had himself only erred through an excessive pliancy to the will of others. "My yielding was my own fault," he admitted, "whatsoever his persuasions; but far from a contemptuous heart, or else God pluck out both heart and bowels with utter shame."[2]

So soon as Sir Thomas Heneage had presented himself, and revealed the full extent of the Queen's wrath, the Earl's disposition to cast the whole crime on the shoulders of Davison became quite undisguised.

1 Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 162, $\frac{9}{19}$ March, 1586. 2 Ibid. 163, same data.

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"I thank you for your letters," wrote Leicester to Walsingham, "though you can send me no comfort. Her Majesty doth deal hardly to believe so ill of me. It is true I faulted, . . but she doth not consider what commodities she hath withal, and herself no way engaged for it, as Mr. Davison might have better declared it, if it had pleased him. And I must thank him only for my blame, and so he will confess to you, for, I protest before God, no necessity here could have made me leave her Majesty unacquainted with the cause before I would have accepted of it, *but only his so earnest pressing me with his faithful assured promise to discharge me, however her Majesty should take it.* For you all see there she had no other cause to be offended but this, and, *by the Lord*, he was the only cause; albeit it is no sufficient allegation, being as I am. . . . . He had, I think, saved all to have told her, as he promised me. *But now it is laid upon me*, God send the cause to take no harm, my grief must be the less. . . . . How far Mr. Heneage's commission shall deface me I know not. He is wary to observe his commission, and I consent withal. I know the time will be her Majesty will be sorry for it. In the meantime I am too, too weary of the high dignity. I would that any that could serve her Majesty were placed in it, and I to sit down with all my losses."[2]

In more manful strain he then alluded to the sufferings of his army. "Whatsoever become of me," he said, "give me leave to speak for the poor soldiers. If they be not better maintained, being in this strange country, there will be neither good service done, nor be without great dishonour to her Majesty. . . . . Well, you see the wants, and it is one cause that will glad me to be rid of this heavy high calling, and wish *me at my poor cottage again*, if any I shall find. But let her Majesty pay them well, and appoint such a man as Sir William Pelham to govern them, and she never wan more honour than these men here will do, I am persuaded."[2]

That the Earl was warmly urged by all most conversant

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 165-167, $\frac{5}{15}$ March, 1586. [2] Ibid.

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with Netherland politics to assume the government was a fact admitted by all. That he manifested rather eagerness than reluctance on the subject, and that his only hesitation arose from the proposed restraints upon the power, not from scruples about accepting the power, are facts upon record. There is nothing save his own assertion to show any backwardness on his part to snatch the coveted prize; and that assertion was flatly denied by Davison, and was indeed refuted by every circumstance in the case. It is certain that he had concealed from Davison the previous prohibitions of the Queen. He could anticipate much better than could Davison, therefore, the probable indignation of the Queen. It is strange then that he should have shut his eyes to it so wilfully, and stranger still that he should have relied on the envoy's eloquence instead of his own to mitigate that emotion. Had he placed his defence simply upon its true basis, the necessity of the case, and the impossibility of carrying out the Queen's intentions in any other way, it would be difficult to censure him; but that he should seek to screen himself by laying the whole blame on a subordinate, was enough to make any honest man who heard him hang his head. "I meant not to do it, but Davison told me to do it, please your Majesty, and if there was naughtiness in it, he said he would make it all right with your Majesty." Such, reduced to its simplest expression, was the defence of the magnificent Earl of Leicester.

And as he had gone cringing and whining to his royal mistress, so it was natural that he should be brutal and blustering to his friend.

"By your means," said he,[1] "I have fallen into her Majesty's deep displeasure. . . . . If you had delivered to her the truth of my dealing, her Highness never could have conceived, as I perceive she doth. . . . . Nor doth her Majesty know *how hardly*[2] I was drawn to accept this place before I had acquainted her—as to which you promised you would not

[1] Leicester to Davison, with his comments in reply written in the margin. Bruce, 168-171, $\frac{10}{20}$ March, 1586.

[2] The words italicized in the text were underscored by Davison, with the marginal comment—"Let Sir Philip Sidney and others witness."

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only give her full satisfaction, but would procure me great thanks. . . . . You did chiefly persuade me to take this charge upon me. . . . . You can remember how many treaties you and others had with the States, before I agreed, for all *yours and their persuasion to take it.*[1] . . . . You gave me assurance to satisfy her Majesty, but I see not that you have done anything . . . . I did not hide from you the doubt I had of her Majesty's ill taking it. . . . . *You chiefly brought me into it,*[2] . . . . and it could no way have been heavy to you, though you had told the uttermost of your own doing, as you faithfully promised you would. . . . . *I did very unwillingly come into the matter,*[3] doubting that to fall out which is come to pass, ... and it doth so *fall out by your negligent carelessness, whereof I many hundred times told you that you would*[4] both mar the goodness of the matter, and breed me her Majesty's displeasure. . . . . Thus fare you well, and except your embassages have better success, I shall have no cause to commend them."

And so was the unfortunate Davison ground into finest dust between the upper and lower millstones of royal wrath and loyal subserviency.

Meantime the other special envoy had made his appearance in the Netherlands; the other go-between between the incensed Queen and the backsliding favourite. It has already been made sufficiently obvious, by the sketch given of his instructions, that his mission was a delicate one. In obedience to those instructions, Heneage accordingly made his appearance before the council, and, in Leicester's presence, delivered to them the severe and biting reprimand which Elizabeth had chosen to inflict upon the States and upon the governor. The envoy performed his ungracious task as daintily as he could, and after preliminary consultation with Leicester; but the proud Earl was deeply mortified. "The fourteenth day

[1] "All this while there was no note of any contrary commandment."—Comment of Davison.

[2] "Absolutely denied."—Comment of Davison.

[3] "Hereof let the world judge."—Davison.

[4] Words underscored by Davison, with the comment—"You might doubt it, but if you had uttered so much, you should have employed some other in the journey, which I had no reason to affect much, preseeing well enough how thankless it would be." Bruce, 170.

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of this month of March," said he, "Sir Thomas Heneage delivered a very sharp letter from her Majesty to the council of estate, besides his message—myself being present, for so was her Majesty's pleasure, as he said, and I do think he did but as he was commanded. How great a grief it must be to an honest heart and a true, faithful servant, before his own face, to a company of very wise and grave counsellors, who had conceived a marvellous opinion before of my credit with her Majesty, to be charged now with a manifest and wilful contempt! Matter enough to have broken any man's heart, that looked rather for thanks, as God doth know I did when I first heard of Mr. Heneage's arrival—I must say to your Lordship, for discharge of my duty, I can be no fit man to serve here—my disgrace is too great—protesting to you that since that day I cannot find it in my heart to come into that place, where, by my own sufferings torn, I was made to be thought so lewd a person."[1]

He then comforted himself—as he had a right to do—with the reflection that this disgrace inflicted was more than he deserved, and that such would be the opinion of those by whom he was surrounded.

"Albeit one thing," he said, "did greatly comfort me, that they all best knew the wrong was great I had, and that her Majesty was very wrongfully informed of the state of my cause. I doubt not but they can and will discharge me, howsoever they shall satisfy her Majesty. And as I would rather wish for death than justly to deserve her displeasure, so, good my Lord, this disgrace not coming for any ill service to her, pray procure me a speedy resolution, that I may go hide me and pray for her. My heart is broken, though thus far I can quiet myself, that I know I have done her Majesty as faithful and good service in these countries as ever she had done her since she was Queen of England. . . . . Under correction, my good Lord, I have had Halifax law—to be condemned first and inquired upon after. I pray God that no man find this measure that I have done, and deserved no worse."[2]

1 Leicester to Burghley, 17 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) 2 Ibid.

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He defended himself—as Davison had already defended him—upon the necessities of the case.

"I, a poor gentleman," he said, "who have wholly depended upon herself alone—and now, being commanded to a service of the greatest importance that ever her Majesty employed any servant in, and finding the occasion so serving me, and the necessity of time such as would not permit such delays, flatly seeing that if that opportunity were lost, the like again for her service and the good of the realm was never to be looked for, presuming upon the favour of my prince, as many servants have done, exceeding somewhat thereupon, rather than breaking any part of my commission, taking upon me a place whereby I found these whole countries could be held at her best devotion, without binding her Majesty to any such matter as she had forbidden to the States before—finding, I say, both the time and opportunity to serve, and no lack but to trust to her gracious acceptation, I now feel that how good, how honourable, how profitable soever it be, it is turned to a worse part than if I had broken all her commissions and commandments, to the greatest harm, and dishonour, and danger, that may be imagined against her person, state, and dignity."[1]

He protested, not without a show of reason, that he was like to be worse punished "for well-doing than any man that had committed a most heinous or traitorous offence," and he maintained that if he had not accepted the government, as he had done, "the whole State had been gone and wholly lost."[2] All this—as we have seen—had already been stoutly urged by Davison, in the very face of the tempest, but with no result, except to gain the enmity of both parties to the quarrel. The ungrateful Leicester now expressed confidence that the second go-between would be more adroit than the first had proved. "The causes why," said he, "Mr. Davison could have told—no man better—but Mr. Heneage can now tell, who hath sought to the uttermost the bottom of all things. I will stand to his report, whether glory or vain desire of title

[1] Leicester to Burghley. (MS. last cited.) [2] Ibid.

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caused me to step one foot forward in the matter. My place was great enough and high enough before, with much less trouble than by this, besides the great indignation of her Majesty. . . . . If I had overslipt the good occasion then in danger, I had been worthy to be hanged, and to be taken for a most lewd servant to her Majesty, and a dishonest wretch to my country."[1]

But diligently as Heneage had sought to the bottom of all things, he had not gained the approbation of Sidney. Sir Philip thought that the new man had only ill botched a piece of work that had been most awkwardly contrived from the beginning. "Sir Thomas Heneage," said he, "hath with as much honesty, in my opinion done as much hurt as any man this twelvemonth hath done with naughtiness. But I hope in God, when her Majesty finds the truth of things, her graciousness will not utterly overthrow a cause so behooveful and costly unto her."[2]

He briefly warned the government that most disastrous effects were likely to ensue, if the Earl should be publicly disgraced, and the recent action of the States reversed. The penny-wise economy, too, of the Queen, was rapidly proving a most ruinous extravagance. "I only cry for Flushing," said Sidney, "but, unless the monies be sent over, there will some terrible accident follow, particularly to the cautionary towns, if her Majesty mean to have them cautions."[3]

The effect produced by the first explosion of the Queen's wrath was indeed one of universal suspicion and distrust. The greatest care had been taken, however, that the affair should be delicately handled, for Heneage, while doing as much hurt by honesty as others by naughtiness, had modified his course as much as he dared in deference to the opinions of the Earl himself, and that of his English counsellors. The great culprit himself, assisted by his two lawyers, Clerk and Killigrew—had himself drawn the bill of his own indictment. The letters of the Queen to the States, to the council,

[1] Leicester to Burghley. (MS. just cited.)
[2] Sir P. Sidney to Burghley, 18 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) [3] Ibid.

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and to the Earl himself, were, of necessity, delivered, but the reprimand which Heneage had been instructed to fulminate was made as harmless as possible. It was arranged that he should make a speech before the council, but abstain from a protocol. The oration was duly pronounced, and it was, of necessity, stinging. Otherwise the disobedience to the Queen would have been flagrant. But the pain inflicted was to disappear with the first castigation. The humiliation was to be public and solemn, but it was not to be placed on perpetual record.

"We thought best," said Leicester, Heneage, Clerk, and Killigrew—"according to her Majesty's secret instructions—to take that course which might least endanger the weak estate of the Provinces—that is to say, to utter so much in words as we hoped might satisfy her excellent Majesty's expectation, and yet leave them nothing in writing to confirm that which was secretly spread in many places to the hindrance of the good course of settling these affairs. Which speech, after Sir Thomas Heneage had devised, and we both perused and allowed, he, by our consent and advice, pronounced to the council of state. This we did think needful—especially because every one of the council that was present at the reading of her Majesty's first letters, was of the full mind, that if her Majesty should again show the least mislike of the present government, or should not by her next letters confirm it, they were all undone—for *that every man would cast with himself which way to make his peace.*"[1]

Thus adroitly had the "poor gentleman, who could not find it in his heart to come again into the place, where—by his own sufferings torn—he was made to appear so lewd a person"—provided that there should remain no trace of that lewdness and of his sovereign's displeasure, upon the record of the States.[2] It was not long, too, before the Earl was enabled to surmount his mortification; but the end was not yet.

[1] "The Resolution of my Lord, &c., for the speech I should use to the Council of the States upon the letters written from H. Majesty in March, 14 March, 1586." Signed by Leicester, Heneage, Clerk, and Killigrew. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] In the foreign correspondence, or

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The universal suspicion, consequent on these proceedings, grew most painful. It pointed to one invariable quarter. It was believed by all that the Queen was privately treating for peace, and that the transaction was kept a secret not only from the States but from her own most trusted counsellors also. It would be difficult to exaggerate the pernicious effects of this suspicion. Whether it was a well-grounded one or not, will be shown in a subsequent chapter, but there is no doubt that the vigour of the enterprise was thus sapped at a most critical moment. The Provinces had never been more heartily banded together since the fatal 10th of July, 1584, than they were in the early spring of 1586. They were rapidly organizing their own army, and, if the Queen had manifested more sympathy with her own starving troops,[1] the

"despatch books," between the States General and England, there are no letters either from Queen Elizabeth, or from Ortell, who was in England during the whole of the year 1586, as agent of Holland and Zeeland, and, at the close of the year, was added to the number of commissioners sent by the States General to the Queen. Nor are there any letters addressed to Elizabeth or to Ortell, although there are a few notes (which I have used) made by the persons to whom was entrusted the task of drawing up letters to be sent by Davison in the middle of February, 1586, and afterwards. There are, indeed, no letters of 1586 relative to England or to the Leicester government, to be found in the archives of the Hague; nor is there in the daily register of the sessions of the States General for 1586—which I have examined, page by page, very carefully—a trace of the dissatisfaction of the Queen, or of the angry correspondence which ensued, after the acceptance by Leicester of the "absolute" government. All the pieces have been lost—probably secreted at the period—so that no one could tell at present, by consulting the Hague Archives only, that there had been a quarrel. Bor, Meteren, and other contemporaries, give an account of the transaction, in the main correct, although most of them are of opinion that the Queen's anger was mere pretence, and that she was desirous of assuming the sovereignty, in case the Provinces were deemed by Leicester capable of maintaining their own cause. This view as we have seen, was quite erroneous.

It is remarkable that between 23 Feb. and 11 April, 1586, the States General were not in session.

[1] "I will not trouble your Lordship," wrote Leicester to Burghley on the 15 March, 1586, "with any thing that may privately concern myself. I see what the acceptation of my services is, and how little it availeth to allege most just reasons in defence of them. But though I see I am, and must be, disgraced, which God I hope will give me strength to bear patiently, yet let me entreat your L'p to be a mean to her M. that the poor soldiers be not beaten for my sake. There came no penny of treasure over since my coming hither. That which then came was most part due before it came. There is much due to them. They cannot get a penny. Their credit is spent. They *perish for want of victual and clothing in great numbers.* The whole and some are ready to mutiny," &c. S. P. Office MS.

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united Englishmen and Hollanders would have been invincible even by Alexander Farnese.

Moreover, they had sent out nine war-vessels to cruise off the Cape Verd Islands for the homeward-bound Spanish treasure-fleet from America, with orders, if they missed it, to proceed to the West Indies; so that, said Leicester, "the King of Spain will have enough to do between these men and Drake."[1] All parties had united in conferring a generous amount of power upon the Earl, who was, in truth, stadholder-general, under grant from the States—and both Leicester and the Provinces themselves were eager and earnest for the war. In war alone lay the salvation of England and Holland. Peace was an impossibility. It seemed to the most experienced statesmen of both countries even an absurdity. It may well be imagined, therefore, that the idea of an underhand negotiation by Elizabeth would cause a frenzy in the Netherlands. In Leicester's opinion, nothing short of a general massacre of the English would be the probable consequence. "No doubt," said he, "the very way it is to put us all to the sword here. For mine own part it would be happiest for me, though I wish and trust to lose my life in better sort."[2]

Champagny, however, was giving out mysterious hints that the King of Spain could have peace with England when he wished for it. Sir Thomas Cecil, son of Lord Burghley, on whose countenance the States especially relied, was returning on sick-leave from his government of the Brill, and this sudden departure of so eminent a personage, joined with the public disavowal of the recent transaction between Leicester and the Provinces, was producing a general and most sickening apprehension as to the Queen's good faith. The Earl did not fail to urge these matters most warmly on the consideration of the English council, setting forth that the States were stanch for the war, but that they would be beforehand with her if she attempted by underhand means to compass a peace. "If these men once smell any such matter," wrote

[1] Leicester to Burghley, 17 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) [2] Ibid.

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Leicester to Burghley, "be you sure they will soon come before you, to the utter overthrow of her Majesty and state for ever."[1]

The Earl was suspecting the "false boys," by whom he was surrounded, although it was impossible for him to perceive, as we have been enabled to do, the wide-spread and intricate meshes by which he was enveloped. "Your Papists in England," said he, "have sent over word to some in this company, that all that they ever hoped for is come to pass; that my Lord of Leicester shall be called away in greatest indignation with her Majesty, and to confirm this of Champagny, I have myself seen a letter that her Majesty is in hand with a secret peace. God forbid! for if it be so, her Majesty, her realm, and we, are all undone."[2]

The feeling in the Provinces was still sincerely loyal towards England. "These men," said Leicester, "yet honour and most dearly love her Majesty, and hardly, I know, will be brought to believe ill of her any way." Nevertheless these rumours, to the discredit of her good faith, were doing infinite harm; while the Earl, although keeping his eyes and ears wide open, was anxious not to compromise himself any further with his sovereign, by appearing himself to suspect her of duplicity. "Good, my Lord," he besought Burghley, "do not let her Majesty know of this concerning Champagny as coming from me, for she will think it is done for my own cause, which, by the Lord God, it is not, but even on the necessity of the case for her own safety, and the realm, and us all. Good my Lord, as you will do any good in the matter, let not her Majesty understand any piece of it to come from me."[3]

The States-General, on the 25th March, N. S., addressed a respectful letter to the Queen, in reply to her vehement chidings. They expressed their deep regret that her Majesty should be so offended with the election of the Earl of Leicester as absolute governor. They confessed that she had just cause of dis-

$\frac{15}{25}$ March, 1586.

[1] Leicester to Burghley, MS. last cited. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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pleasure, but hoped that when she should be informed of the whole matter she would rest better satisfied with their proceedings. They stated that the authority was the same which had been previously bestowed upon governors-general; observing that by the word "absolute," which had been used in designation of that authority, nothing more had been intended than to give to the Earl full power to execute his commission, while the *sovereignty of the country was reserved to the people.* This commission, they said, could not be without danger revoked. And therefore they most humbly besought her Majesty to approve what had been done, and to remember its conformity with her own advice to them, that a multitude of heads, whereby confusion in the government is bred, should be avoided.[1]

Leicester, upon the same occasion, addressed a letter to Burghley and Walsingham, expressing himself as became a crushed and contrite man, never more to raise his drooping head again, but warmly and manfully urging upon the attention of the English government—for the honour and interest of the Queen herself—"the miserable state of the poor soldiers." The necessity of immediate remittances in order to keep them from starving, was most imperious. For himself, he was smothering his wretchedness until he should learn her Majesty's final decision, as to what was to become of him. "Meantime," said he, "I carry my grief inward, and

[1] The letter is given in Meteren, xii. 234. Wagenaar (viii. 121, note 4) observes, very correctly, that, when the States were thus glibly explaining away the word "absolute," they had either not read over very carefully the commission granted by themselves to Leicester, or trusted that the Queen would not closely examine that document. In this original contract with the Earl were these words: "Item, his Excellency shall have full authority and absolute power (volle macht en absoluyt geweld) within the Provinces in the matter of policy and justice (in 't stuck van de politie en justitie)." Comp. Bor, II. 686. Groot Plakaat Boek, iv. 81. Meteren, *ubi sup.*

Bor, Meteren, and many contemporary writers, as well as Wagenaar and other more modern authorities, are quite mistaken in representing the whole angry demonstration made by the Queen in regard to this acceptance by Leicester of the "absolute" government as a farce, and a farce which had been previously arranged. We have seen from the private letters of the period how very genuine was the ill humour of Elizabeth.

The state-council also, on the 27 March, 1586 (N.S.), addressed a letter to the Queen, of similar tenor to that written by the States-General. Printed in Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' Append. 468, 469.

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will proceed till her Majesty's full pleasure come with as little discouragement to the cause as I can. I pray God her Majesty may do that may be best for herself. For my own part my heart is broken, but not by the enemy."[1]

There is no doubt that the public disgrace thus inflicted upon the broken-hearted governor, and the severe censure administered to the States by the Queen were both ill-timed and undeserved. Whatever his disingenuousness towards Davison, whatever his disobedience to Elizabeth, however ambitious his own secret motives may have been, there is no doubt at all that thus far he had borne himself well in his great office.

Richard Cavendish—than whom few had better opportunities of judging—spoke in strong language on the subject. "It is a thing almost incredible," said he, "that the care and diligence of any one man living could, in so small time, have so much repaired so disjointed and loose an estate as my Lord found this country in. But lest he should swell in pride of that his good success, your Lordship knoweth that God hath so tempered the cause with the construction thereof, as may well hold him in good consideration of human things."[2] He alluded with bitterness—as did all men in the Netherlands who were not open or disguised Papists—to the fatal rumours concerning the peace-negotiation in connection with the recall of Leicester. "There be here advertisements of most fearful instance," he said, "namely, that Champagny doth not spare most liberally to bruit abroad that he hath in his hands the conditions of peace offered by her Majesty unto the King his master, and that it is in his power to conclude at pleasure—which fearful and mischievous plot, if in time it be not met withal by some notable encounter, it cannot but prove the root of great ruin."[3]

The "false boys" about Leicester were indefatigable in spreading these rumours, and in taking advantage—with the

[1] Leicester to Burghley and Walsingham, 15 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.

[2] Cavendish to Burghley, 18 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Ibid.

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assistance of the Papists in the obedient Provinces and in England—of the disgraced condition in which the Queen had placed the favourite. Most galling to the haughty Earl—most damaging to the cause of England, Holland, and liberty—were the tales to his discredit, which circulated on the Bourse at Antwerp, Middelburg, Amsterdam, and in all the other commercial centres. The most influential bankers and merchants were assured by a thousand chattering—but as it were invisible—tongues, that the Queen had for a long time disliked Leicester; that he was a man of no account among the statesmen of England; that he was a beggar and a bankrupt; that, if he had waited two months longer, he would have made his appearance in the Provinces with one man and one boy for his followers; that the Queen had sent him thither to be rid of him; that she never intended him to have more authority than Sir John Norris had; that she could not abide the bestowing the title of Excellency upon him, and that she had not disguised her fury at his elevation to the post of governor-general.[1]

All who attempted a refutation of these statements were asked, with a sneer, whether her Majesty had ever written a line to him, or in commendation of him, since his arrival. Minute inquiries were made by the Dutch merchants of their commercial correspondents, both in their own country and in England, as to Leicester's real condition and character at home. What was his rank, they asked, what his ability, what his influence at court? Why, if he were really of so high quality as had been reported, was he thus neglected, and at last disgraced? Had he any landed property in England? Had he really ever held any other office but that of master of the horse? "And then," asked one particular busy body, who made himself very unpleasant on the Amsterdam Exchange, "why has her Majesty forbidden all noblemen and gentlemen from coming hither, as was the case at the beginning? Is it because she is hearkening to a peace? And if it

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 214-219, $\frac{5}{15}$ April, 1586.

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be so, quoth he, we are well handled; for if her Majesty hath sent a disgraced man to amuse us, while she is secretly working a peace for herself, when we—on the contrary—had broken off all our negotiations, upon confidence of her Majesty's goodness; such conduct will be remembered to the end of the world, and the Hollanders will never abide the name of England again."[1]

On such a bed of nettles there was small chance of repose for the governor. Some of the rumours were even more stinging. So incomprehensible did it seem that the proud sovereign of England should send over her subjects to starve or beg in the streets of Flushing and Ostend, that it was darkly intimated that Leicester had embezzled the funds, which, no doubt, had been remitted for the poor soldiers.[2] This was the most cruel blow of all. The Earl had been put to enormous charges. His household at the Hague cost him a thousand pounds a month. He had been paying and furnishing five hundred and fifty men out of his own purse. He had also a choice regiment of cavalry, numbering seven hundred and fifty horse, three hundred and fifty of which number were over and above those allowed for by the Queen, and were entirely at his expense. He was most liberal in making presents of money to every gentleman in his employment. He had deeply mortgaged his estates in order to provide for these heavy demands upon him, and professed his willingness "to spend more, if he might have got any more money for his land that was left;" and in the face of such unquestionable facts —much to the credit certainly of his generosity—he was accused of swindling a Queen whom neither Jew nor Gentile had ever yet been sharp enough to swindle; while he was in reality plunging forward in a course of reckless extravagance in order to obviate the fatal effects of her penuriousness.

Yet these sinister reports were beginning to have a poisonous effect. Already an alteration of mien was perceptible in

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.,' last cited. [2] 'Leyc. Corresp.' 216, $\frac{5}{15}$ April, 1586. [3] Ibid. 214-219.

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the States-General. "Some buzzing there is amongst them," said Leicester, "whatsoever it be. They begin to deal very strangely within these few days."[1] Moreover the industry of the Poleys, Blunts, and Pagets, had turned these unfavourable circumstances to such good account that a mutiny had been near breaking out among the English troops. "And, before the Lord I speak it," said the Earl, "I am sure some of these good towns had been gone ere this, but for my money. As for the States, I warrant you, they see day at a little hole. God doth know what a forward and a joyful country here was within a month. God send her Majesty to recover it so again, and to take care of it, on the condition she send me after Sir Francis Drake to the Indies, my service here being no more acceptable."[2]

Such was the aspect of affairs in the Provinces after the first explosion of the Queen's anger had become known. Meanwhile the court-weather was very changeable in England, being sometimes serene, sometimes cloudy, always treacherous. Mr. Vavasour, sent by the Earl with despatches to her Majesty and the council, had met with a sufficiently benignant reception. She accepted the letters, which, however, owing to a bad cold with a defluxion in the eyes, she was unable at once to read; but she talked ambiguously with the messenger. Vavasour took pains to show the immediate necessity of sending supplies, so that the armies in the Netherlands might take the field at the earliest possible moment. "And what," said she, "if a peace should come in the mean time?"[3]

"If your Majesty desireth a convenient peace," replied Vavasour, "to take the field is the readiest way to obtain it; for as yet the King of Spain hath had no reason to fear you. He is daily expecting that your own slackness may give your Majesty an overthrow. Moreover, the Spaniards are soldiers, and are not to be moved by shadows."[4]

[1] 'Leyc. Corresp.,' last cited.
[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 194, 195, $\frac{21 \text{ March}}{10 \text{ April}}$, 1586.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

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But the Queen had no ears for these remonstrances, and no disposition to open her coffers. A warrant for twenty-four thousand pounds[1] had been signed by her at the end of the month of March, and was about to be sent, when Vavasour arrived; but it was not possible for him, although assisted by the eloquence of Walsingham and Burghley, to obtain an enlargement of the pittance. "The storms are overblown," said Walsingham, "but I fear your Lordship shall receive very scarce measure from hence. You will not believe how the sparing humour doth increase upon us."[2]

Nor were the storms so thoroughly overblown but that there were not daily indications of returning foul weather. Accordingly—after a conference with Vavasour—Burghley, and Walsingham had an interview with the Queen, in which the Lord Treasurer used bold and strong language. He protested to her that he was bound, both by his duty to himself and his oath as her councillor, to declare that the course she was holding to Lord Leicester was most dangerous to her own honour, interest and safety. If she intended to continue in this line of conduct, he begged to resign his office of Lord Treasurer; wishing, before God and man, to wash his hands of the shame and peril which he saw could not be avoided. The Queen, astonished at the audacity of Burghley's attitude and language, hardly knew whether to chide him for his presumption or to listen to his arguments. She did both. She taxed him with insolence in daring to address her so roundly, and then finding he was speaking even *in amaritudine animæ* and out of a clear conscience, she became calm again, and intimated a disposition to qualify her anger against the absent Earl.[3]

Next day, to their sorrow, the two councillors found that the Queen had again changed her mind—"as one that had

[1] This sum added to the 52,000*l.* already advanced, made 76,000*l.* in all, "which," said Burghley, "her Majesty doth often repeat with great offence." 'Leyc. Corresp.' 199, $\frac{21 \text{ March}}{10 \text{ April}}$, 1586.

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corres.' 191, $\frac{28 \text{ March}}{7 \text{ April}}$, 1586.

[3] Ibid. 197, $\frac{31 \text{ March}}{10 \text{ April}}$, 1586.

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been by some adverse counsel seduced." She expressed the opinion that affairs would do well enough in the Netherlands, even though Leicester were displaced. A conference followed between Walsingham, Hatton, and Burghley, and then the three went again to her Majesty. They assured her that if she did not take immediate steps to satisfy the States[1] and the people of the Provinces, she would lose those countries and her own honour at the same time; and that then they would prove a source of danger to her instead of protection and glory. At this she was greatly troubled, and agreed to do anything they might advise consistently with her honour. It was then agreed that Leicester should be continued in the government which he had accepted until the matter should be further considered, and letters to that effect were at once written. Then came a messenger from Sir Thomas Heneage, bringing despatches from that envoy, and a second and most secret one from the Earl himself. Burghley took the precious letter which the favourite had addressed to his royal mistress, and had occasion to observe its magical effect.[2] Walsingham and the Lord Treasurer had been right in so earnestly remonstrating with him on his previous silence.

"She read your letter," said Burghley, "and, in very truth, I found her princely heart touched with favourable interpretation of your actions; affirming them to be only offensive to her, *in that she was not made privy to them; not now misliking that you had the authority.*"[3]

Such, at fifty-three, was Elizabeth Tudor. A gentle whisper of idolatry from the lips of the man she loved, and she was wax in his hands. Where now were the vehement

[1] Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' 198, last cited.

[2] This letter was probably very tender and personal, for no trace of it is to be found in the English archives.

[3] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 198, 199, $\frac{31 \text{ March}}{10 \text{ April}}$, 1586; and, three weeks later, after the news of the success of the Earl before Grave (to be described in a subsequent chapter) had reached England, Walsingham observed to Leicester, "I do assure your Lordship I think her Majesty took as much joy upon the view of your letter, in seeing you restored to your former comfort, grounded upon her favour, as she did in the overthrow of the enemy." Ibid. 230, $\frac{21 \text{ April}}{1 \text{ May}}$, 1586.

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protestations of horror that her public declaration of principles and motives had been set at nought? Where now were her vociferous denunciations of the States, her shrill invectives against Leicester, her big oaths, and all the *hysterica passio*, which had sent poor Lord Burghley to bed with the gout, and inspired the soul of Walsingham with dismal forebodings? Her anger had dissolved into a shower of tenderness, and if her parsimony still remained it was because that could only vanish when she too should cease to be.

And thus, for a moment, the grave diplomatic difference between the crown of England and their high mightinesses the United States—upon the solution of which the fate of Christendom was hanging—seemed to shrink to the dimensions of a lovers' quarrel. Was it not strange that the letter had been so long delayed?

Davison had exhausted argument in defence of the acceptance by the Earl of the authority conferred by the States, and had gained nothing by his eloquence, save abuse from the Queen, and acrimonious censure from the Earl. He had deeply offended both by pleading the cause of the erring favourite, when the favourite should have spoken for himself. "Poor Mr. Davison," said Walsingham, "doth take it very grievously that your Lordship should conceive so hardly of him as you do. I find the conceit of your Lordship's disfavour hath greatly dejected him. But at such time as he arrived her Majesty was so incensed, as all the arguments and orators in the world could not have wrought any satisfaction."[1]

But now a little *billet-doux* had done what all the orators in the world could not do. The arguments remained the same, but the Queen no longer "misliked that Leicester should have the authority." It was natural that the Lord Treasurer should express his satisfaction at this auspicious result.

"I did commend her princely nature," he said, "in allowing your good intention, and excusing you of any spot of evil

[1] Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' 206, $\frac{1}{10}$ April, 1586.

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meaning ; and I thought good to hasten her resolution, which you must now take to come from a favourable good mistress. You must strive with your nature to throw over your shoulder that which is past."[1]

Sir Walter Raleigh, too, who had been "falsely and pestilently" represented to the Earl as an enemy, rather than what he really was, a most ardent favourer of the Netherland cause, wrote at once to congratulate him on the change in her Majesty's demeanour. "The Queen is in very good terms with you now," he said, "and, thanks be to God, well pacified, and *you are again her 'sweet Robin.'*"[2]

Sir Walter wished to be himself the bearer of the comforting despatches to Leicester, on the ground that he had been represented as an "ill instrument against him," and in order that he might justify himself against the charge, with his own lips. The Queen, however, while professing to make use of Shirley as the messenger, bade Walsingham declare to the Earl, upon her honour, that Raleigh had done good offices for him, and that, in the time of her anger, he had been as earnest in his defence as the best friend could be. It would have been singular, indeed, had it been otherwise. "Your Lordship," said Sir Walter, "doth well understand my affection toward Spain, and how I have consumed the best part of my fortune, hating the tyrannous prosperity of that state. It were strange and monstrous that I should now become an enemy to my country and conscience. All that I have desired at your Lordship's hands is that you will evermore deal directly with me in all matters of suspect doubleness, and so ever esteem me as you shall find me deserving good or bad. In the mean time, let no poetical scribe work your Lordship by any device to doubt that I am a hollow or cold servant to the action."[3]

It was now agreed that letters should be drawn up authorizing Leicester to continue in the office which he held, until

[1] Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' 199, $\frac{31 \text{ March}}{10 \text{ April}}$, 1586.

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 193, 194, $\frac{29 \text{ March}}{8 \text{ April}}$, 1586. [3] Ibid.

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the state-council should devise some modification in his commission. As it seemed, however, very improbable that the board would devise anything of the kind, Burghley expressed the belief that the country was like to continue in the Earl's government without any change whatever. The Lord Treasurer was also of opinion that the Queen's letters to Leicester would convey as much comfort as he had received discomfort; although he admitted that there was a great difference. The former letters he knew had deeply wounded his heart, while the new ones could not suddenly sink so low as the wound.[1]

The despatch to the States-General was benignant, elaborate, slightly diffuse. The Queen's letter to 'sweet Robin' was caressing, but argumentative.

"It is always thought," said she, "in the opinion of the world, a hard bargain when both parties are losers, and so doth fall out in the case between us two. You, as we hear, are greatly grieved in respect of the great displeasure you find we have conceived against you. We are no less grieved that a subject of ours of that quality that you are, a creature of our own, and one that hath always received an extraordinary portion of our favour above all our subjects, even from the beginning of our reign, should deal so carelessly, not to say contemptuously, as to give the world just cause to think that we are had in contempt by him that ought most to respect and reverence us, which, we do assure you, hath wrought as great grief in us as any one thing that ever happened unto us.

"We are persuaded that you, that have so long known us, cannot think that ever we could have been drawn to have taken so hard a course therein had we not been provoked by an extraordinary cause. But for that your grieved and wounded mind hath more need of comfort than reproof, who, we are persuaded, though the act of contempt can no ways be excused, had no other meaning and intent than to advance our service, we think meet to forbear to dwell upon a matter

[1] Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 202, $\frac{31 \text{ March}}{10 \text{ April}}$, 1586.

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wherein we ourselves do find so little comfort, assuring you that whosoever professeth to love you best taketh not more comfort of your well doing, or discomfort of your evil doing than ourself."[1]

After this affectionate preface she proceeded to intimate her desire that the Earl should take the matter as nearly as possible into his own hands. It was her wish that he should retain the *authority* of absolute governor, but—if it could be so arranged—that he should dispense with the *title*, retaining only that of her lieutenant-general. It was not her intention however, to create any confusion or trouble in the Provinces, and she was therefore willing that the government should remain upon precisely the same footing as that on which it then stood, until circumstances should permit the change of title which she suggested. And the whole matter was referred to the wisdom of Leicester, who was to advise with Heneage and such others as he liked to consult, although it was expressly stated that the present arrangement was to be considered a provisional and not a final one.[2]

[1] Bruce, 'Leyc. Corresp.' 209, April $\frac{1}{11}$ 1586.

[2] Ibid. Queen to Leicester, $\frac{\text{March 30}}{\text{April 10}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) On the day before, she had addressed a shorter letter of similar tenour to the Earl.

In her letters of the same date to Heneage, she congratulated both herself and the envoy that he had not been so precipitate in executing, as she had been in ordaining, the condign and public chastisement of the great delinquent. Sir Thomas might, in the humour in which the Queen now found herself, have even ventured upon a still longer delay, and a more decided mitigation, of the sentence. Tender, indeed, was the tone, compared with that in which she had so lately communicated her sentiments to the departing diplomatist, in which she now expressed her satisfaction that he had not been hasty in obeying "her secret directions touching the revocation of her cousin the Earl's government."

"We perceive by your letters," she observed, "that if the same had been executed according to our first purpose, it would have wrought some dangerous alteration in the state there, and utterly have overthrown the reputation and credit of our cousin, no less prejudicial to our service than the utter defacing and overthrow of one whom we ourselves have raised up, and have always found as greatly devoted to our service as ever sovereign found any subject. Though in his late proceeding touching the absolute government he did greatly forget himself, yet we would never have proceeded against him so severely had not our honour been touched. We are well persuaded that this offence and error grew not out of any evil meaning toward us, whose service we know he doth prefer even before his own life. And although we have assured him so much by our own letters, directed to him, yet we think meet you should labour, by all means, to comfort him, whose mind—as we understand from yourself and others—

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Until this soothing intelligence could arrive in the Netherlands the suspicions concerning the underhand nego-

is greatly wounded and overthrown, and also to remove any hard opinion that may be formed against him, as a man quite shaken out of our favour." Queen to Heneage, April $\frac{1}{11}$ 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

She reiterated her instructions as to the repairing, as handsomely as possible, of the Earl's broken heart, in a style which was almost pathetic.

"You have been an eye-witness," she said, "of the great love we have always borne him above any subject we have, and therefore you can easily guess the grief we should conceive if he should miscarry. We doubt not therefore that you will leave nothing undone that may salve his wounded mind, and repair his credit, if you find the same decayed."

She was desirous that Sir Thomas should be the medium through which the Earl's pardon should be communicated to the States, as he had already been the vehicle which had borne to them her wrath. Although, therefore, she had written to themselves very much at length, she had yet reserved certain points upon which they were referred to the envoy for details. This proceeding she intended as an especial compliment to Heneage. "Forasmuch," so she expressed herself, "as you have already yielded the one part of the scorpion which is to wound, we think that we should do you wrong if you should not deliver some matter of contentment, whereby you may cure." (Ibid.)

She then proceeded to handle the two points contained in the last missive of the States-General to herself. Upon the first, namely, that the absolute government conferred on the Earl was not repugnant to the original treaty, and was offensive rather in name than in matter, she reasoned at considerable length. Her grounds of objection are, however, sufficiently well known. She considered that the acceptance without her permission savoured of contempt, and that an implied permission on her part was an impeachment on the self-denying nature of her original declarations. She had been most anxious, therefore, lest "the world should condemn her, as guilty of cunning and unprincely dealing"; nor had she seen the need of the extreme haste with which the matter had been concluded, without previous communication to herself.

As to the second point in the message of the States—that the Queen would be pleased to "stay the revocation of the authority granted" to Leicester, because of the imminent danger of such a proceeding—her Majesty's benignity, compared with her ferocity but a few short weeks before, seemed almost incredible.

"You shall proceed, in the answering of this point," said she, "*according to such resolution as shall be taken by our cousin the Earl*, upon debating the matter with you and such others as he shall call unto him for that purpose." (Ibid.)

Just one fortnight before, the Earl had been forced to stand, as it were, in a white sheet, with candle in hand, before the state-council. His heart had been broken in consequence, and he had resolved never again to appear in that chamber where he had been made to enact so sorry a part. Now a blank paper was furnished to himself and Heneage, which they were to inscribe with the most flattering expressions that could be desired from royal lips.

"You shall use all the persuasions you may," said Elizabeth, "to remove any opinion that may be conceived by the council of state to the hindrance or prejudice of our cousin the Earl's former reputation, as though the qualification which we now seek proceeded of any mislike that we had of any honour that hath been or may be yielded to him.... Assure them that they can no way better show the good-will they bear towards us than by continuing their former devotion toward the Earl, of whose love and devotion towards us, you may tell them, we make that account as of no other subject more." (Ibid.)

She then alluded to the reports

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tiations with Spain grew daily more rife, and the discredit cast upon the Earl more embarrassing. The private letters

"thrown abroad" that she had a secret intention of treating for her own peace with the enemy apart, as "malicious bruits":—"For as our fortune," said she, in the most explicit language which pen could write, "is so joined with theirs, that the good or evil success of their affairs must needs harm or prosper ours, so you may assure them that we, for our part, are resolved to *do nothing that may concern them without their own knowledge and good liking.*" (Ibid.)

The despatch to the States-General was very explicit on the subject of the title, but most affectionate in style.

"We find by your late letters," said the Queen, "that you are greatly grieved through some mislike conceived by us against you, in respect of the offer to our cousin of Leicester of the absolute government of the United Provinces being made without our privity, and contrary to our express commandment to the said Earl. We pray you, in this case, to consider that we were not rashly carried into this mislike, neither could we have been drawn into so hard and severe a course, had we not been provoked by two things that do greatly import us in honour. The one, that the Earl's acceptation, contrary to our commandment, might work in the opinion of the world, that it proceeded of contempt; the other, that we sought to abuse the world, in pretending outwardly that our proceedings with those countries tended only to relieve them in their distressed state against such as sought to tyrannise them, when the acceptation of the absolute government by the Earl, being a creature of our own, and known to be wholly at our devotion, could not but give them just cause to conceive otherwise of us. A matter we had just cause to look into, considering what a number of evil and malignant spirits do reign in these days, that are apt, upon the least advantage that may be, to deliver out hard and wicked censures of princes' doings." Queen to the States-General, $\frac{\text{30 March}}{\text{9 April}}$ 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

The States were then reminded that, although there was nothing absolutely incompatible in the absolute government as accepted by Leicester with the nature of the original treaty, the Queen had resolutely set her face from the beginning against any such step, because she was "loath to give the world cause to think that she was moved by any other respect to assist them than by the love she bore them and the commiseration she had for their affliction." (Ibid.)

"And therefore," she continued, "seeing there was no special matter contained in the treaty that might any way give him any authority to accept the offer, reason would that before the matter had been proceeded in, we had been first made acquainted therewith. For we do not see, for anything that yet hath been declared unto us touching certain pretended dangers, but that the acceptation thereof might have been delayed until our pleasure had been first known. We hope that you have put on that conceit of us, as we would have been loath, either in respect of yourselves or of our cousin the Earl, to have proceeded so severely as we intended, if we had not been justly provoked thereunto. For yourselves, our love towards you cannot more plainly appear than in that we do oppose ourselves, for your sake, unto one of the mightiest potentates in Europe, without regard either to the expense of our treasure, or of our subjects' lives. And as touching the Earl, all the world knoweth that he is one of our own raising, and we do acknowledge that no man can carry more love than he hath ever shewed to bear towards us. And touching the cause of this our present offence, we do acknowledge our persuasion that the same proceeded of no evil meaning towards us, though good intents many times bring forth dangerous and evil fruits. If the offence had not grown out of a public and open action, none would have been more ready to have

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which passed between the Earl's enemies in Holland and in England contained matter more damaging to himself and to the cause which he had at heart than the more public reports of modern days can disseminate, which, being patent to all, can be more easily contradicted. Leicester incessantly warned his colleagues of her Majesty's council against the malignant manufacturers of intelligence. "I pray you, my Lords, as you are wise," said he, "beware of them all. You shall find them here to be *shrewd pick-thinks*, and hardly worth the hearkening unto."[1]

He complained bitterly of the disgrace that was heaped upon him, both publicly and privately, and of the evil consequences which were sure to follow from the course pursued. "Never was man so villanously handled by letters out of England as I have been," said he, "not only advertising her Majesty's great dislike with me before this my coming over, but that I was an odious man in England, and so long as I tarried here that no help was to be looked for, that her Majesty would send no more men or money, and that I was used here but for a time till a peace were concluded between her Majesty and the Prince of Parma. What the continuance of a man's discredit thus will turn out is to be thought of, for better I were a thousand times displaced than that her Majesty's great advantage of so notable Provinces should be hindered."[2]

hidden the same than ourselves. Therefore, we pray you to think that this mislike of ours hath grown rather out of grief, in respect of the love we bear him, than out of indignation, as one of whom we have conceived a sinister opinion, whom we do esteem as greatly devoted towards us as ever subject was to prince; and so we hope you will use him, without either diminishing any part of that good-will and love that you have hitherto professed towards him, or leaving that respect that is due unto him as our minister, or that he may justly challenge at your hands, who, for your sakes, is content to expose both his life and fortune unto any peril, which is not the least cause why we esteem so greatly of him. And whereas, by your late letters, you have signified that the commission and authority granted unto him cannot be revoked without great peril to the state, we have given authority to our cousin the Earl, and to our servant Sir Thomas Heneage, to confer with you upon some course to be taken, as we conceive both our honour may be saved and the peril avoided. We pray you to bend yourselves to do that, as both the one and the other may be provided for." (Ibid.)

[1] Leicester to Burghley, $\frac{6}{16}$ April, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Ibid.

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As to the peace-negotiations—which, however cunningly managed, could not remain entirely concealed—the Earl declared them to be as idle as they were disingenuous. "I will boldly pronounce that all the peace you can make in the world, leaving these countries," said he to Burghley, "will never prove other than a fair spring for a few days, to be all over blasted with a hard storm after."[1] Two days later her Majesty's comforting letters arrived, and the Earl began to raise his drooping head. Heneage, too, was much relieved, but he was, at the same time, not a little perplexed. It was not so easy to undo all the mischief created by the Queen's petulance. The "scorpion's sting"—as her Majesty expressed herself—might be balsamed, but the poison had spread far beyond the original wound.

"The letters just brought in," wrote Heneage to Burghley, "have well relieved a most noble and sufficient servant, but I fear they will not restore the much-repaired wrecks of these far-decayed noble countries into the same state I found them in. A loose, disordered, and unknit state needs no shaking, but propping. A subtle and fearful kind of people should not be made more distrustful, but assured."[2] He then expressed annoyance at the fault already found with him, and surely if ever man had cause to complain of reproofs administered him, in quick succession, for not obeying contradictory directions following upon each other as quickly, that man was Sir Thomas Heneage. He had been, as he thought, over cautious in administering the rebuke to the Earl's arrogance, which he had been expressly sent over to administer; but scarcely had he accomplished his task, with as much delicacy as he could devise, when he found himself censured, not for dilatoriness, but for haste. "*Fault I perceive,*" said he to Burghley, "*is found in me*, not by your Lordship, but by some other, *that I did not stay proceeding if I found the public cause might take hurt.* It is true I had good warrant for the

[1] Leicester to Burghley, MS. last cited.

[2] Heneage to Burghley, $\frac{8}{18}$ April, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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manner, the place, and the persons, but for *the matter none, for done it must be.* Her Majesty's offence must be declared. Yet if I did not all I possibly could to uphold the cause, and to keep the tottering cause upon the wheels, I deserve no thanks, but reproof."[1]

Certainly, when the blasts of royal rage are remembered, by which the envoy had been, as it were, blown out of England into Holland, it is astonishing to find his actions censured for undue precipitancy. But it was not the first, nor was it likely to be the last time for comparatively subordinate agents in Elizabeth's government to be distressed by contradictory commands, when the sovereign did not know, or did not chose to make known, her own mind on important occasions. "Well, my Lord," said plaintive Sir Thomas, "wiser men may serve more pleasingly and happily, but never shall any serve her Majesty more faithfully and heartily. And so I cannot be persuaded her Majesty thinketh; for from herself I find nothing but most sweet and gracious favour, though by others' censures I may gather otherwise of her judgment, which I confess doth cumber me."[2]

He was destined to be cumbered more than once before these negotiations should be concluded, but meantime there was a brief gleam of sunshine. The English friends of Leicester in the Netherlands were enchanted with the sudden change in the Queen's humour; and to Lord Burghley, who was not, in reality, the most stanch of the absent Earl's defenders, they poured themselves out in profuse and somewhat superfluous gratitude.[3]

Cavendish, in strains exultant, was sure that Burghley's children, grand-children, and remotest posterity, would rejoice that their great ancestor, in such a time of need, had been

[1] Letter to Burghley, MS. last cited.

[2] Ibid.

[3] North to Burghley, $\frac{9}{19}$ April, 1586, (S. P. Office MS.)

No greater mistake could have been made than to insinuate, as Leicester's English correspondents had insinuated, that North was a secret enemy to Leicester, and had maligned him in his letters to influential personages at home. I have read many of North's unpublished letters to Burghley and other statesmen, and they all speak of the Earl in strongest language of admiration and attachment.

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"found and felt to be indeed a pater patriæ, a good father to a happy land." And, although unwilling to "stir up the old Adam" in his Lordship's soul, he yet took the liberty of comparing the Lord Treasurer, in his old and declining years, to Mary Magdalen, assuring him, that for ever after, when the tale of the preservation of the Church of God, of her Majesty, and of the Netherland cause, which were all one, should be told, his name and well-doing would be held in memory also.[1]

And truly there was much of honest and generous enthusiasm, even if couched in language somewhat startling to the ears of a colder and more material age, in the hearts of these noble volunteers. They were fighting the cause of England, of the Netherland republic, and of human liberty, with a valour worthy the best days of English chivalry, against manifold obstacles, and they were certainly not too often cheered by the beams of royal favour.

It was a pity that a dark cloud was so soon again to sweep over the scene. For the temper of Elizabeth at this important juncture seemed as capricious as the April weather in which the scenes were enacting. We have seen the genial warmth of her letters and messages to Leicester, to Heneage, to the States-General, on the first of the month. Nevertheless it was hardly three weeks after they had been despatched, when Walsingham and Burghley found her Majesty one morning in a towering passion, because the Earl had not already laid down the government. The Lord Treasurer ventured to re-

[1] Richard Cavendish to Burghley, $\frac{8}{18}$ April, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

"It may please you to think with yourself what a favour the Lord hath herein bestowed upon you in these your old and declining years, namely, from your good and happy labours to adorn your posterity with the note of this most just and worthy renown, that such a father, a grand-father, or ancestor of theirs, in such a needful time, was both found and felt to be indeed pater patriæ, a good father to a happy land. Suspicion of flattery ought of right to be secluded, where assured truth doth enforce the conclusion. Neither do I write this to stir up in your Lordship old Adam, but knowing you well have learned Christ, I do it only to quicken in you the joy of well-doing, grounded upon faith. For if the Lord himself refrained not to add unto Mary Magdalen's well-doing this ornament unto her name for ever, that wheresoever the Gospel should be preached, there should also the memorial of that her act be had in record, then doubt I not but that example may well warrant me," &c.

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monstrate, but was bid to hold his tongue. Ever variable and mutable as woman, Elizabeth was perplexing and baffling to her counsellors, at this epoch, beyond all divination. The "sparing humour" was increasing fearfully, and she thought it would be easier for her to slip out of the whole expensive enterprise, provided Leicester were merely her lieutenant-general, and not stadholder for the Provinces. Moreover the secret negotiations for peace were producing a deleterious effect upon her mind. Upon this subject, the Queen and Burghley, notwithstanding his resemblance to Mary Magdalen, were better informed than the Secretary, whom, however, it had been impossible wholly to deceive. The man who could read secrets so far removed as the Vatican, was not to be blinded to intrigues going on before his face. The Queen, without revealing more than she could help, had been obliged to admit that informal transactions were pending, but had authorised the Secretary to assure the United States that no treaty would be made without their knowledge and full concurrence. "She doth think," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, "that you should, if you shall see no cause to the contrary, acquaint the council of state there that certain overtures of peace are daily made unto her, but that she meaneth not to proceed therein *without their good liking and privity*, being persuaded that there can no peace be made profitable or sure for her that shall not also stand with their safety; and she doth acknowledge hers to be so linked with theirs as nothing can fall out to their prejudice, but she must be partaker of their harm."[1]

This communication was dated on the 21st April, exactly three weeks after the Queen's letter to Heneage, in which she had spoken of the "malicious bruits" concerning the pretended peace-negotiations; and the Secretary was now confirming, by her order, what she had then stated under her own hand, that she would "do nothing that might concern them without *their own knowledge and good liking.*"

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 232, $\frac{21 \text{ April}}{1 \text{ May}}$ 1586.

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And surely nothing could be more reasonable. Even if the strict letter of the August treaty between the Queen and the States did not provide against any separate negotiations by the one party without the knowledge of the other, there could be no doubt at all that its spirit absolutely forbade the clandestine conclusion of a peace with Spain by England alone, or by the Netherlands alone, and that such an arrangement would be disingenuous, if not positively dishonourable.

Nevertheless it would almost seem that Elizabeth had been taking advantage of the day when she was writing her letter to Heneage on the 1st of April. Never was painstaking envoy more elaborately trifled with. On the 26th of the month—and only five days after the communication by Walsingham just noticed—the Queen was furious that any admission should have been made to the States of their right to participate with her in peace-negotiations.

"We find that Sir Thomas Heneage," said she to Leicester, "hath gone further—in assuring the States that we would make no peace without their privity and assent—than he had commission; for that our direction was—if our meaning had been well set down, and not mistaken by our Secretary—that they should have been only let understand that in any treaty that might pass between us and Spain, they might be well assured we would have no less care of their safety than of our own."[1]

Secretary Walsingham was not likely to mistake her Majesty's directions in this or any other important affair of state.[2] Moreover, it so happened that the Queen had, in her own letter to Heneage, made the same statement which

1 Queen to Leicester, $\frac{26 \text{ April}}{6 \text{ May}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

Almost the same words were used in a letter to Sir Thomas Heneage of the same date, $\frac{26 \text{ April}}{6 \text{ May}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) Printed also in Bruce, p. 241, from a copy in the handwriting of Heneage in the British Museum.

2 "When she chargeth your Lordship," wrote Walsingham to Leicester ($\frac{20}{30}$ May, 1586), "with the acquainting the council of state there with the overtures of peace made unto her by the Prince of Parma as a fault, herein your Lordship is wronged, for the fault is mine, if any were committed. *But in very truth, she gave me commandment to direct you to acquaint them withal, though now she doth deny it.* I have received, within these few days, many of these hard measures." Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' p. 272.

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she now chose to disavow. She had often a convenient way of making herself misunderstood, when she thought it desirable to shift responsibility from her own shoulders upon those of others; but upon this occasion she had been sufficiently explicit. Nevertheless, a scape-goat was necessary, and unhappy the subordinate who happened to be within her Majesty's reach when a vicarious sacrifice was to be made. Sir Francis Walsingham was not a man to be brow-beaten or hood-winked, but Heneage was doomed to absorb a fearful amount of royal wrath.

"What phlegmatical reasons soever were made you," wrote the Queen, who but three weeks before had been so gentle and affectionate to her ambassador, "how happeneth it that you will not remember, that when a man hath faulted and committed by abettors thereto, neither the one nor the other will willingly make their own retreat. Jesus! what availeth wit, when it fails the owner at greatest need? Do that you are bidden, and leave your considerations for your own affairs. For in some things you had clear commandment, which you did not, and in others none, and did. We princes be wary enough of our bargains. Think you I will be bound by your own speech to *make no peace for mine own matters without their consent? It is enough that I injure not their country nor themselves in making peace for them without their consent.* I am assured of your dutiful thoughts, but I am utterly at squares with this childish dealing."[1]

Blasted by this thunderbolt falling upon his head out of serenest sky, the sad Sir Thomas remained, for a time, in a state of political annihilation. 'Sweet Robin' meanwhile, though stunned, was unscathed—thanks to the convenient conductor at his side. For, in Elizabeth's court, mediocrity was not always golden, nor was it usually the loftiest mountains that the lightnings smote. The Earl was deceived by his royal mistress, kept in the dark as to important trans-

[1] Queen to Heneage, $\frac{26 \text{ April}}{6 \text{ May}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.) Printed also in Bruce (p. 243), from a copy in the handwriting of Heneage in the Brit. Mus.)

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actions, left to provide for his famishing soldiers as he best might; but the Queen at that moment, though angry, was not disposed to trample upon him. Now that his heart was known to be broken, and his sole object in life to be retirement to remote regions—India[1] or elsewhere—there to languish out the brief remainder of his days in prayers for Elizabeth's happiness, Elizabeth was not inclined very bitterly to upbraid him. She had too recently been employing herself in binding up his broken heart, and pouring balm into the "scorpion's sting," to be willing so soon to deprive him of those alleviations.

Her tone was however no longer benignant, and her directions were extremely peremptory. On the 1st of April she had congratulated Leicester, Heneage, the States, and all the world, that her secret commands had been staid, and that the ruin which would have followed, had those decrees been executed according to her first violent wish, was fortunately averted. Heneage was even censured, not by herself, but by courtiers in her confidence, and with her concurrence, for being *over hasty* in going before the state-council, as he had done, with her messages and commands. On the 26th of April she expressed astonishment that Heneage had dared to be *so dilatory*, and that the title of governor had not been laid down by Leicester "*out of hand*."[2] She marvelled greatly, and found it very strange that "ministers in matters of moment should presume to do things of their own head without direction."[3] She accordingly gave orders that there should be no more dallying, but that the Earl should immediately hold a conference with the state-council in order to arrange a modification in his commission. It was her pleasure that he should retain all the authority granted to him by the States, but as already intimated by her, that he should abandon the title of "absolute governor," and retain only that of her lieutenant-general.[4]

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' p. 217.

[2] Queen to Leicester, $\frac{26 \text{ April}}{6 \text{ May}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid. See also Queen to Heneage, same date. (S. P. Office MS.; and printed in Bruce, p. 242.)

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Was it strange that Heneage, placed in so responsible a situation, and with the fate of England, of Holland, and perhaps of all Christendom, hanging in great measure upon this delicate negotiation, should be amazed at such contradictory orders, and grieved by such inconsistent censures?

"To tell you my griefs and my lacks," said he to Walsingham, "would little please you or help me. Therefore I will say nothing, but think there was never man in so great a service received so little comfort and so contrarious directions. But Dominus est adjutor in tribulationibus. If it be possible, let me receive some certain direction, in following which I shall not offend her Majesty, what good or hurt soever I do besides."[1]

This certainly seemed a loyal and reasonable request, yet it was not one likely to be granted. Sir Thomas, perplexed, puzzled, blindfolded, and brow-beaten, always endeavoring to obey orders, when he could comprehend them, and always hectored and lectured whether he obeyed them or not—ruined in purse by the expenses of a mission on which he had been sent without adequate salary—appalled at the disaffection waxing more formidable every hour in Provinces which were recently so loyal to her Majesty, but which were now pervaded by a suspicion that there was double-dealing upon her part—became quite sick of his life. He fell seriously ill, and was disappointed, when, after a time, the physicians declared him convalescent. For when he rose from his sick-bed, it was only to plunge once more, without a clue, into the labyrinth where he seemed to be losing his reason.

"It is not long," said he to Walsingham, "since I looked to have written you no more letters, my extremity was so great. . . . . But God's will is best, otherwise I could have liked better to have cumbered the earth no longer, where I find myself contemned, and which I find no reason to see will be the better in the wearing. . . . It were better for her Majesty's service that the directions which

[1] Heneage to Walsingham, $\frac{3}{13}$ May, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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come were not contrarious one to another, and that those you would have serve might know what is meant, else they cannot but much deceive you, as well as displease you."[1]

Public opinion concerning the political morality of the English court was not gratifying, nor was it rendered more favourable by these recent transactions. "I fear," said Heneage, "that the world will judge what Champagny wrote in one of his letters out of England (which I have lately seen) to be over true. His words be these, 'Et de vray, c'est le plus fascheux et le plus incertain negocier de ceste court, que je pense soit au monde.'"[2] And so "hasting," as he said, "with a weak body and a willing mind, to do, he feared, no good work," he set forth from Middelburgh to rejoin Leicester at Arnheim, in order to obey, as well as he could, the Queen's latest directions.[3]

But before he could set to work there came more "contrarious" orders. The last instructions, both to Leicester and himself, were that the Earl should resign the post of governor absolute "out of hand," and the Queen had been vehement in denouncing any delay on such an occasion. He was now informed, that, after consulting with Leicester and with the state-council, he was to return to England with the result of such deliberations. It could afterwards be decided how the Earl could retain all the authority of governor absolute, while bearing only the title of the Queen's lieutenant general.[4] "For her meaning is not," said Walsingham, "that his Lordship should presently give it over, for she foreseeth in her princely judgment that his giving over the government upon a sudden, and leaving those countries without a head or

[1] Heneage to Walsingham, $\frac{7}{17}$ May, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Ibid.

[3] Heneage to Burghley, same date. (S. P. Office MS.) "For her Majesty's services," said he to the Lord Treasurer, as he had said to the Secretary of State, "it were very convenient, that such as you would have serve you here might know truly what you mean, and might accordingly have certain directions what to do. And surely hitherto, so have not I had, which is the only cause why I cannot in this service please you there, which God knoweth I most care for, if I could tell how."

[4] Walsingham to Heneage, $\frac{14}{24}$ May, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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director, cannot but breed a most dangerous alteration there."[1] The secretary therefore stated the royal wish at present to be that the "renunciation of the title" should be delayed till Heneage could visit England, and subsequently return to Holland with her Majesty's further directions. Even the astute Walsingham was himself puzzled, however, while conveying these ambiguous orders; and he confessed that he was doubtful whether he had rightly comprehended the Queen's intentions. Burghley, however, was better at guessing riddles than he was, and so Heneage was advised to rely chiefly upon Burghley.[2]

But Heneage had now ceased to be interested in any énigmas that might be propounded by the English court, nor could he find comfort, as Walsingham had recommended he should do, in railing. "I wish I could follow your counsel," he said, "but sure the uttering of my choler doth little ease my grief or help my case."[3]

He rebuked, however, the inconsistency and the tergiversations of the government with a good deal of dignity. "This certainly shall I tell her Majesty," he said, "if I live to see her, that except a more constant course be taken with this inconstant people, it is not the blaming of her ministers will advance her Highness's service, or better the state of things. And shall I tell you what they now say here of us—I fear not without some cause—even as Lipsius wrote of the French, 'De Gallis quidem enigmata veniunt, non veniunt, volunt, nolunt, audent, timent, omnia, ancipiti metu, suspensa et suspecta.' God grant better, and ever keep you and help me."[4]

He announced to Burghley that he was about to attend a meeting of the state-council the next day, for the purpose of a conference on these matters at Arnheim, and that he would

[1] Same to same. Same date.

[2] Ibid. "This I take to be the substance of her Majesty's pleasure," said Sir Francis, "which she willed both the Lord Treasurer and Mr. Vice-Chamberlain, together with myself, to signify unto you, praying you, for that I think my Lord Treasurer hath best conceived her Majesty's meaning, that you will chiefly rely upon such direction as you shall receive from him." (MS. last cited.)

[3] Heneage to Walsingham, $\frac{25 \text{ May}}{4 \text{ June}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[4] Ibid.

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then set forth for England to report proceedings to her Majesty. He supposed, on the whole, that this was what was expected of him, but acknowledged it hopeless to fathom the royal intentions. Yet if he went wrong, he was always sure to make mischief, and though innocent, to be held accountable for others' mistakes. "Every prick I make," said he, "is made a gash; and to follow the words of my directions from England is not enough, except I likewise see into your minds. And surely mine eyesight is not so good. But I will pray to God for his help herein. With all the wit I have, I will use all the care I can—first, to satisfy her Majesty, as God knoweth I have ever most desired; then, not to hurt this cause, but that I despair of."[1] Leicester, as may be supposed, had been much discomfited and perplexed during the course of these contradictory and perverse directions. There is no doubt whatever that his position had been made discreditable and almost ridiculous, while he was really doing his best, and spending large sums out of his private fortune to advance the true interests of the Queen. He had become a suspected man in the Netherlands, having been, in the beginning of the year, almost adored as a Messiah. He had submitted to the humiliation which had been imposed upon him, of being himself the medium to convey to the council the severe expressions of the Queen's displeasure at the joint action of the States-General and himself. He had been comforted by the affectionate expressions with which that explosion of feminine and royal wrath had been succeeded. He was now again distressed by the peremptory command to do what was a disgrace to him, and an irreparable detriment to the cause, yet he was humble and submissive, and only begged to be allowed, as a remedy for all his anguish, to return to the sunlight of Elizabeth's presence. He felt that her course, if persisted in, would lead to the destruction of the Netherland commonwealth, and eventually to the downfall of England; and that the Provinces, believing themselves deceived by the

[1] Heneage to Burghley, $\frac{25 \text{ May}}{4 \text{ June}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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Queen, were ready to revolt against an authority to which, but a short time before, they were so devotedly loyal. Nevertheless, he only wished to know what his sovereign's commands distinctly were, in order to set himself to their fulfilment. He had come from the camp before Nymegen in order to attend the conference with the state-council at Arnheim, and he would then be ready and anxious to despatch Heneage to England, to learn her Majesty's final determination.

He protested to the Queen that he had come upon this arduous and perilous service only because he considered her throne in danger, and that this was the only means of preserving it; that, in accepting the absolute government, he had been free from all ambitious motives, but deeply impressed with the idea that only by so doing could he conduct the enterprise entrusted to him to the desired consummation; and he declared with great fervour that no advancement to high office could compensate him for this enforced absence from her. To be sent back even in disgrace would still be a boon to him, for he should cease to be an exile from her sight. He knew that his enemies had been busy in defaming him, while he had been no longer there to defend himself, but his conscience acquitted him of any thought which was not for her happiness and glory. "Yet grievous it is to me," said he in a tone of tender reproach, "that having left all—yea, all that may be imagined—for you, you have left me for very little, even to the uttermost of all hard fortune. For what have I, unhappy man, to do here either with cause or country but for you?"[1]

He stated boldly that his services had not been ineffective, that the enemy had never been in worse plight than now, that he had lost at least five thousand men in divers overthrows, and that, on the other hand, the people and towns of the Seven Provinces had been safely preserved. "Since my arrival," he said, "God hath blessed the action which you

[1] Leicester to the Queen, $\frac{23 \text{ May}}{3 \text{ June}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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have taken in hand, and committed to the charge of me your poor unhappy servant. I have good cause to say somewhat for myself, for that I think I have as few friends to speak for me as any man."[1]

Nevertheless—as he warmly protested—his only wish was to return; for the country in which he had lost her favour, which was more precious than life, had become odious to him. The most lowly office in her presence was more to be coveted than the possession of unlimited power away from her. It was by these tender and soft insinuations, as the Earl knew full well, that he was sure to obtain what he really coveted—her sanction for retaining the absolute government in the Provinces. And most artfully did he strike the key.

"Most dear and gracious Lady," he cried, "my care and service here do breed me nothing but grief and unhappiness. I have never had your Majesty's good favour since I came into this charge—a matter that from my first beholding your eyes hath been most dear unto me above all earthly treasures. Never shall I love that place or like that soil which shall cause the lack of it. Most gracious Lady, consider my long, true, and faithful heart toward you. Let not this unfortunate place here bereave me of that which, above all the world, I esteem there, which is your favour and your presence. I see my service is not acceptable, but rather more and more disliketh you. Here I can do your Majesty no service; there I can do you some, at the least rub your horse's heels—a service which shall be much more welcome to me than this, with all that these men may give me. I do, humbly and from my heart, prostrate at your feet, beg this grace at your sacred hands, that you will be pleased to let me return to my home-service, with your favour, let the revocation be used in what sort shall please and like you. But if ever spark of favour was in your Majesty toward your old servant, let me obtain this my humble suit; protesting before the Majesty of all Majesties, that there was no cause under Heaven but his and yours, even for your own special and particular cause,

[1] Leicester to the Queen, MS. just cited.

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I say, could have made me take this absent journey from you in hand. If your Majesty shall refuse me this, I shall think all grace clean gone from me, and I know my days will not be long."[1]

She must melt at this, thought 'sweet Robin' to himself; and meantime, accompanied by Heneage, he proceeded with the conferences in the state-council-chamber, touching the modification of the title and the confirmation of his authority. This, so far as Walsingham could divine, and Burghley fathom, was the present intention of the Queen. He averred that he had ever sought most painfully to conform his conduct to her instructions as fast as they were received, and that he should continue so to do. On the whole, it was decided by the conference to let matters stand as they were for a little longer, and until after Heneage should have time once more to go and come. "The same manner of proceeding that was is now," said Leicester. "Your pleasure is declared to the council here as you have willed it. How it will fall out again in your Majesty's construction, the Lord knoweth."[2]

Leicester might be forgiven for referring to higher powers for any possible interpretation of her Majesty's changing humour; but meantime, while Sir Thomas was getting ready for his expedition to England, the Earl's heart was somewhat gladdened by more gracious messages from the Queen. The alternation of emotions would however prove too much for him, he feared, and he was reluctant to open his heart to so unwonted a tenant as joy.

"But that my fear is such, most dear and gracious Lady," he said, "as my unfortunate destiny will hardly permit, whilst I remain here, any good acceptation of so simple a service as mine, I should greatly rejoice and comfort myself with the hope of your Majesty's most prayed-for favour. But of late, being by your own sacred hand lifted even up into Heaven with joy of your favour, I was bye and bye, without any new

[1] Leicester to the Queen, $\frac{23 \text{ May}}{2 \text{ June}}$, 1586, MS. last cited.

[2] Same to same, $\frac{27 \text{ May}}{6 \text{ June}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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desert or offence at all, cast down and down again into the depth of all grief. God doth know, my dear and dread Sovereign, that after I first received your resolute pleasure by Sir Thomas Heneage, I made neither stop nor stay, nor any excuse to be rid of this place, and to satisfy your command. . . . . So much I mislike this place and fortune of mine, as I desire nothing in the world so much as to be delivered, with your favour, from all charge here, fearing still some new cross of your displeasure to fall upon me, trembling continually with the fear thereof, in such sort as till I may be fully confirmed in my new regeneration of your wonted favour I cannot receive that true comfort which doth appertain to so great a hope. Yet I will not only acknowledge with all humbleness and dutiful thanks the exceeding joy these last blessed lines brought to my long-wearied heart, but will, with all true loyal affection, attend that further joy from your sweet self which may utterly extinguish all consuming fear away."[1]

Poor Heneage—who likewise received a kind word or two after having been so capriciously and petulantly dealt with—was less extravagant in his expressions of gratitude. "The Queen hath sent me a paper-plaister, which must please for a time," he said. "God Almighty bless her Majesty ever, and best direct her."[2] He was on the point of starting for England, the bearer of the States' urgent entreaties that Leicester might retain the government, and of despatches announcing the recent success of the allies before Grave. "God prospereth the action in these countries beyond all expectation," he said, "which all amongst you will not be over glad of, for somewhat I know."[3] The intrigues

[1] Leicester to the Queen, $\frac{27 \text{ May}}{6 \text{ June}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Heneage to Walsingham, $\frac{28 \text{ May}}{7 \text{ June}}$, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[3] Ibid. Just before the envoy had signified to the States the last change in the royal humour, the Netherland council of state had addressed a letter to the Queen. In this document they had excused the celerity with which, moved by the necessity of the case, they had conferred the absolute government upon the Earl. This measure, they said, passed by the unanimous vote of the Provinces, had wonderfully elevated the collapsed minds of the patriots, and filled the enemy with extreme consternation. The renewal of a general authority had laid an excellent foundation for

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of Grafigni, Champagny, and Bodman, with Croft, Burghley, and the others, were not so profound a secret as they could wish.

The tone adopted by Leicester has been made manifest in

completely restoring the republic, had curbed the ferocious hearts of the enemy, had restrained the progress of a hostile army exulting in a career of extraordinary victories, and, with the blessing of God, had changed the fortunes of the war. The prosperity of the United Provinces had been restored by the dignity, virtue, and assiduous solicitude of the illustrious Earl, and was daily on the increase. They had therefore thanked her Majesty for accepting so benignantly their excuses for the authority conferred, and for no longer requiring its diminution. They expressed the opinion that it would be perilous—in the fragile condition of the republic—to change the word (vocabulum) absolute government, which could only be done at a special session of the States, called for that purpose. They feared that, by such a step, at the very moment of restored authority, they should throw prostrate all authority, and overwhelm the commonwealth with confusion. They declared their determination to cherish the dignity and honour of Leicester as being, under God and her Majesty, the foundation of their existence and their felicity. The States of the Provinces, and all individuals, were agreed in admiring and venerating his extraordinary prudence and assiduity. They acknowledged that the safety of the whole republic depended upon the care of the governor, who, moved by his zeal for the true religion, and his pity for their afflicted fortunes, had abandoned his private interests, his country, and the presence of his sovereign, to encounter all the adverse chances of their perturbed republic. (Bruce, 469-471, 1 May, 1586.)

Six weeks later (June 11, 1586, N.S.), after receiving the last communications of the Queen, the council again addressed her in similar strain, entrusting their despatches to Heneage, who was setting forth according to her commands. They expressed their deep affliction that she should again so urgently demand the abrogation of the government-general. Not to comply with a requisition so seriously and repeatedly made, was, as they acknowledged, a grave offence. To comply with it, however, without manifest peril to the republic, was impossible. For the whole conservation of authority depended upon the title and office of governor. If that should shake and vacillate, they feared that in this very beginning of their prosperity, which was, through Divine Providence, every day augmenting, all things would fall headlong into utter ruin, to the joy of the common enemy, to whom the authority conferred upon the Earl was most formidable. For the lieutenancy of the Queen, however great in itself, could never suffice to the administration of political affairs, without the government-general, which could not be adjoined to the lieutenancy, but must proceed from the superior power residing in the States-General. Again, therefore, they most earnestly besought her Majesty to pardon the error which they had committed, through immoderate devotion to herself, and through the necessity of the times. Her sacred breast would, it was hoped, be moved to pretermit the proposed revocation, which could only be accomplished by solemn convocation of the orders, and by exposing the whole affair to the world, a step which, on account of the fluctuation of men's minds, and the insidious suggestions of the enemy, would be attended with infinite peril. They therefore most urgently demanded that the execution of her demand should be deferred, at least to a more convenient season. For the rest they referred the whole matter to the report of Heneage, who was about to return to England, fully instructed as to the views and wishes of the States. Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 472, June 11, 1586, N.S.

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his letters to the Queen. He had held the same language of weariness and dissatisfaction in his communications to his friends. He would not keep the office, he avowed, if they should give him "all Holland and Zeeland, with all their appurtenances," and he was ready to resign at any moment. He was not "ceremonious for reputation," he said, but he gave warning that the Netherlanders would grow desperate if they found her Majesty dealing weakly or carelessly with them. As for himself he had already had enough of government. "I am weary, Mr. Secretary," he plaintively exclaimed, "indeed I am weary; but neither of pains nor travail. My ill hap that I can please her Majesty no better hath quite discouraged me."[1]

He had recently, however—as we have seen—received some comfort, and he was still further encouraged, upon the eve of Heneage's departure, by receiving another affectionate epistle from the Queen. Amends seemed at last to be offered for her long and angry silence, and the Earl was deeply grateful.

"If it hath not been, my most dear and gracious Lady," said he in reply, "no small comfort to your poor old servant to receive but one line of your blessed hand-writing in many months, for the relief of a most grieved, wounded heart, how far more exceeding joy must it be, in the midst of all sorrow, to receive from the same sacred hand so many comfortable lines as my good friend Mr. George hath at once brought me. Pardon me, my sweet Lady, if they cause me to forget myself. Only this I do say, with most humble dutiful thanks, that the scope of all my service hath ever been to content and please you; and if I may do that, then is all sacrifice, either of life or whatsoever, well offered for you."[2]

The matter of the government absolute having been so fully discussed during the preceding four months, and the last opinions of the state-council having been so lucidly

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' pp. 262, 263, $\frac{8}{18}$ May, 1586.

[2] Leicester to the Queen, $\frac{14}{24}$ June, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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expounded in the despatches to be carried by Heneage to England, the matter might be considered as exhausted. Leicester contented himself, therefore, with once more calling her Majesty's attention to the fact that if he had not himself accepted the office thus conferred upon him by the States, it would have been bestowed upon some other personage. It would hardly have comported with her dignity, if Count Maurice of Nassau, or Count William, or Count Moeurs, had been appointed governor absolute, for in that case the Earl, as general of the auxiliary English force, would have been subject to the authority of the chieftain thus selected. It was impossible, as the state-council had very plainly shown, for Leicester to exercise supreme authority, while merely holding the military office of her Majesty's lieutenant-general. The authority of governor or stadholder could only be derived from the supreme power of the country. If her Majesty had chosen to accept the sovereignty, as the States had ever desired, the requisite authority could then have been derived from her, as from the original fountain. As she had resolutely refused that offer however, his authority was necessarily to be drawn from the States-General, or else the Queen must content herself with seeing him serve as an English military officer, only subject to the orders of the supreme power, wherever that power might reside. In short, Elizabeth's wish that her general might be clothed with the privileges of her viceroy, while she declined herself to be the sovereign, was illogical, and could not be complied with.[1]

Very soon after inditing these last epistles to the Provinces, the Queen became more reasonable on the subject; and an elaborate communication was soon received by the state-council, in which the royal acquiescence was signified to the latest propositions of the States. The various topics, suggested in previous despatches from Leicester and from the council, were reviewed, and the whole subject was suddenly placed in a somewhat different light from that in which it seemed to

[1] Leicester to the Queen. MS. last cited.

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have been previously regarded by her Majesty. She alluded to the excuse, offered by the state-council, which had been drawn from the necessity of the case, and from their "great liking for her cousin of Leicester," although in violation of the original contract. "As you acknowledge, however," she said, "that therein you were justly to be blamed, and do crave pardon for the same, we cannot, upon this acknowledgment of your fault, but remove our former dislike.[1]

Nevertheless it would now seem that her "mistake" had proceeded, not from the excess, but from the insufficiency of the powers conferred upon the Earl, and she complained, accordingly, that they had given him shadow rather than substance.[2]

Simultaneously with this royal communication, came a joint letter to Leicester, from Burghley, Walsingham, and Hatton, depicting the long and strenuous conflict which they had maintained in his behalf with the rapidly varying inclinations of the Queen. They expressed a warm sympathy with the difficulties of his position, and spoke in strong terms of the necessity that the Netherlands and England should work heartily together. For otherwise, they said, "the cause will fall, the enemy will rise, and we must stagger." Notwithstanding the secret negociations with the enemy, which Leicester and Walsingham suspected, and

[1] Queen to Council of State, $\frac{16}{26}$ June, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.); much corrected in Burghley's handwriting.

[2] Ibid. "Yet when we look," she proceeded, "into the little profit that the common cause hath received hitherto by the yielding unto him rather in words and writings a title of a kind of absolute government, than any effect of the authority signified by the words of the grant; for that by virtue thereof we understand that he can neither be made thoroughly acquainted with the true state of your affairs there, requisite for such an office as you have given him in name, nor yet receive the due performance of such contributions of money and other necessaries, as were specially promised unto him, before the acceptation of the government; inasmuch as for the lack of due satisfaction of the things promised, he hath been enforced to employ part of our treasure—sent over for the payment of such of our people as by the contract we promised to maintain—to pay and relieve such other forces as were entertained by the States ..... besides many other like burdens laid upon our cousin, contrary to our expectation; all this doth give us cause to *mislike not so much the title* itself, as the lack of performance which the title carries show of—a matter, yea, of things most necessary for your own defence; a matter that, without speedy redress, cannot but breed both imminent peril to those countries and dishonour to us."

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which will be more fully examined in a subsequent chapter, they held a language on that subject, which in the Secretary's mouth at least was sincere. "Whatsoever speeches be blown abroad of parleys of peace," they said, "all will be but smoke, yea fire will follow."[1]

They excused themselves for their previous and enforced silence by the fact that they had been unable to communicate any tidings but messages of distress, but they now congratulated the Earl that her Majesty, as he would see by her letter to the council, was firmly resolved, not only to countenance his governorship, but to sustain him in the most thorough manner. It would be therefore quite out of the question *for them to listen to his earnest propositions to be recalled.*[2]

Moreover, the Lord Treasurer had already apprized Leicester that Heneage had safely arrived in England, that he had made his report to the Queen, and that her Majesty was "very well contented with him and his mission."[3]

It may be easily believed that the Earl would feel a sensation of relief, if not of triumph, at this termination to the embarrassments under which he had been labouring ever since he listened to the oration of the wise Leoninus upon New Years' Day. At last the Queen had formally acquiesced in the action of the States, and in his acceptance of their offer. He now saw himself undisputed "governor absolute," having been six months long a suspected, discredited, almost disgraced man. It was natural that he should express himself cheerfully.

"My great comfort received, oh my most gracious Lady," he said, "by your most favourable lines written by your own sacred hand, I did most humbly acknowledge by my former letter; albeit I can no way make testimony oft enough of

[1] Burghley, Hatton, and Walsingham, to Leicester, $\frac{17}{27}$ June, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] Ibid. "Her Majesty is not only minded," they said, "but, as we perceive, resolutely determined,—yea, persuaded fully—that it is necessary for *your Lordship not only to continue in the government*, but to have it more amply established and perfected to all purposes for your credit and strength, and especially with money and men for maintenance of those countries against the enemy. We should greatly err, therefore, if we should at this time move her Majesty to recal you."

[3] Bruce, 307.

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the great joy I took thereby. And seeing *my wounded heart is by this means almost made whole*, I do pray unto God that either I may never feel the like again from you, or not be suffered to live, rather than I should fall again into those torments of your displeasure. Most gracious Queen, I beseech you, therefore, make perfect that which you have begun. Let not the common danger, nor any ill, incident to the place I serve you in, be accompanied with greater troubles and fears indeed than all the horrors of death can bring me. My strong hope doth now so assure me, as I have almost won the battle against despair, and I do arm myself with as many of those wonted comfortable conceits as may confirm my new revived spirits, reposing myself evermore under the *shadow of those blessed beams* that must yield the only nourishment to this disease."[1]

But however nourishing the shade of those blessed beams might prove to Leicester's disease, it was not so easy to bring about a very sunny condition in the Provinces. It was easier for Elizabeth to mend the broken heart of the governor than to repair the damage which had been caused to the commonwealth by her caprice and her deceit. The dispute concerning the government absolute had died away, but the authority of the Earl had got a "crack in it" which never could be handsomely made whole.[2] The States, during the long period of Leicester's discredit—feeling more and more doubtful as to the secret intentions of Elizabeth—disappointed in the condition of the auxiliary troops and in the amount of supplies furnished from England, and, above all, having had time to regret their delegation of a power which they began to find agreeable to exercise with their own hands, became indisposed to entrust the Earl with the administration and full inspection of their resources. To the enthusiasm which had greeted the first arrival of Elizabeth's representative

[1] Leicester to the Queen, $\frac{20}{30}$ June, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] "My credit hath been cracked ever since her Majesty sent Sir Thomas Heneage hither, as all men can tell you." Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 424, Oct. $\frac{2}{12}$, 1586.

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had succeeded a jealous, carping, suspicious sentiment. The two hundred thousand florins monthly were paid, according to the original agreement, but the four hundred thousand of extra service-money subsequently voted were withheld, and withheld expressly on account of Heneage's original mission to disgrace the governor."[1]

"The late return of Sir Thomas Heneage," said Lord North, "hath put such busses in their heads, as they march forward with leaden heels and doubtful hearts."[2]

In truth, through the discredit cast by the Queen upon the Earl in this important affair, the supreme authority was forced back into the hands of the States, at the very moment when they had most freely divested themselves of power. After the Queen had become more reasonable, it was too late to induce them to part, a second time, so freely with the immediate control of their own affairs. Leicester had become, to a certain extent, disgraced and disliked by the Estates. He thought himself, by the necessity of the case, forced to appeal to the people against their legal representatives, and thus the foundation of a nominally democratic party, in opposition to the municipal one, was already laid. Nothing could be more unfortunate at that juncture; for we shall, in future, find the Earl in perpetual opposition to the most distinguished statesmen in the Provinces; to the very men indeed who had been most influential in offering the sovereignty to England, and in placing him in the position which he had so much coveted. No sooner therefore had he been con-

[1] —— "as to the not paying by the States of the 200,000 florins a-month, agreed upon," said Leicester to the Queen, "I must needs say that they have paid that 200,000, but that I stand upon of late with them is 200,000 more, which they long since agreed upon, and I sent word to your Majesty. And herein, indeed, they have been very slack; but if your Majesty will pardon me to speak the truth of that stay, *it grew only upon Sir Thomas Heneage's coming with the message of your displeasure; for from that time till this they have not only sought to hinder the agreement, but to intermeddle wholly again with all things which did appertain to my office.* To withstand them—to be plain—I durst not, and they have applied it diligently since to work that conceit into every man's head," &c. &c. Leicester to the Queen, $\frac{14}{24}$ June, 1586, (S. P. Office MS.)

[2] North to Burghley, $\frac{29 \text{ May}}{8 \text{ June}}$ 1586 (S. P. Office MS.)

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firmed by Elizabeth in that high office than his arrogance broke forth, and the quarrels between himself and the representative body became incessant.

"I stand now in somewhat better terms than I did," said he; "I was not in case till of late to deal roundly with them as I have now done. I have established a chamber of finances, against some of their wills, whereby I doubt not to procure great benefit to increase our ability for payments hereafter. The people I find still best devoted to her Majesty, though of late many lewd practices have been used to withdraw their good wills. But it will not be; they still pray God that her Majesty may be their sovereign. She should then see what a contribution they will all bring forth. *But to the States they will never return*, which will breed some great mischief, *there is such mislike of the States universally.* I would your Lordship had seen the case I had lived in among them these four months, especially after her Majesty's mislike was found. You would then marvel to see how I have waded, as I have done, through no small obstacles, without help, counsel, or assistance."[1]

Thus the part which he felt at last called upon to enact was that of an aristocratic demagogue, in perpetual conflict with the burgher-representative body.

It is now necessary to lift a corner of the curtain, by which some international—or rather interpalatial—intrigues were concealed, as much as possible, even from the piercing eyes of Walsingham. The Secretary was, however, quite aware—despite the pains taken to deceive him—of the nature of the plots and of the somewhat ignoble character of the actors concerned in them.

[1] Leicester to Burghley, $\frac{18}{28}$ June, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

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CHAPTER VIII.

Forlorn Condition of Flanders — Parma's secret Negotiations with the Queen — Grafigni and Bodman — Their Dealings with English Counsellors — Duplicity of Farnese — Secret Offers of the English Peace-Party — Letters and Intrigues of De Loo — Drake's Victories and their Effect — Parma's Perplexity and Anxiety — He is relieved by the News from England — Queen's secret Letters to Parma — His Letters and Instructions to Bodman — Bodman's secret Transactions at Greenwich — Walsingham detects and exposes the Plot — The Intriguers baffled — Queen's Letter to Parma and his to the King — Unlucky Results of the Peace-Intrigues — Unhandsome Treatment of Leicester — Indignation of the Earl and Walsingham — Secret Letter of Parma to Philip — Invasion of England recommended — Details of the Project.

ALEXANDER FARNESE and his heroic little army had been left by their sovereign in as destitute a condition as that in which Lord Leicester and his unfortunate "paddy persons" had found themselves since their arrival in the Netherlands. These mortal men were but the weapons to be used and broken in the hands of the two great sovereigns, already pitted against each other in mortal combat. That the distant invisible potentate, the work of whose life was to do his best to destroy all European nationality, all civil and religious freedom, should be careless of the instruments by which his purpose was to be effected, was but natural. It is painful to reflect that the great champion of liberty and of Protestantism was almost equally indifferent to the welfare of the human creatures enlisted in her cause. Spaniards and Italians, English and Irish, went half naked and half starving through the whole inclement winter, and perished of pestilence in droves, after confronting the less formidable dangers of battle-field and leaguer. Manfully and sympathetically did the Earl of Leicester—while whining in absurd hyperbole over the angry demeanour of his sovereign towards himself—represent the imperative duty of an English government to succour English troops.

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Alexander Farnese was equally plain-spoken to a sovereign with whom plain-speaking was a crime. In bold, almost scornful language, the Prince represented to Philip the sufferings and destitution of the little band of heroes, by whom that magnificent military enterprise, the conquest of Antwerp, had just been effected. "God will be weary of working miracles for us," he cried, "and nothing but miracles can save the troops from starving." There was no question of paying them their wages, there was no pretence at keeping them reasonably provided with lodging and clothing, but he asserted the undeniable proposition that they "could not pass their lives without eating,"[1] and he implored his sovereign to send at least money enough to buy the soldiers shoes. To go foodless and barefoot without complaining, on the frozen swamps of Flanders, in January, was more than was to be expected from Spaniards and Italians. The country itself was eaten bare. The obedient Provinces had reaped absolute ruin as the reward of their obedience. Bruges, Ghent, and the other cities of Brabant and Flanders, once so opulent and powerful, had become mere dens of thieves and paupers. Agriculture, commerce, manufactures—all were dead. The condition of Antwerp was most tragical. The city, which had been so recently the commercial centre of the earth, was reduced to absolute beggary. Its world-wide traffic was abruptly terminated, for the mouth of its great river was controlled by Flushing, and Flushing was in the firm grasp of Sir Philip Sidney, as governor for the English Queen. Merchants and bankers, who had lately been possessed of enormous resources, were stripped of all. Such of the industrial classes as could leave the place had wandered away to Holland and England. There was no industry possible, for there was no market for the products of industry. Antwerp was hemmed in by the enemy on every side, surrounded by royal troops in a condition of open mutiny, cut off from the ocean, deprived of daily bread, and yet obliged to contribute out of its poverty to the maintenance of the Spanish soldiers,

[1] "No se puede pasar la vida sin comer." Parma to Philip II. 28 Feb. 1586. (Archivo de Simancas, MS.)

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who were there for its destruction. Its burghers, compelled to furnish four hundred thousand florins, as the price of their capitulation, and at least six hundred thousand more[1] for the repairs of the dykes, the destruction of which, too long deferred, had only spread desolation over the country without saving the city, and over and above all forced to rebuild, at their own expense, that fatal citadel, by which their liberty and lives were to be perpetually endangered, might now regret at leisure that they had not been as stedfast during their siege as had been the heroic inhabitants of Leyden in their time of trial, twelve years before. Obedient Antwerp was, in truth, most forlorn. But there was one consolation for her and for Philip, one bright spot in the else universal gloom. The ecclesiastics assured Parma, that, notwithstanding the frightful diminution in the population of the city, they had confessed and absolved more persons that Easter than they had ever done since the commencement of the revolt. Great was Philip's joy in consequence.[2] "You cannot imagine my satisfaction," he wrote, "at the news you give me concerning last Easter."[3]

With a ruined country, starving and mutinous troops, a bankrupt exchequer, and a desperate and pauper population, Alexander Farnese was not unwilling to gain time by simulated negociations for peace. It was strange, however, that so sagacious a monarch as the Queen of England should suppose it for her interest to grant at that moment the very delay which was deemed most desirable by her antagonist.

Yet it was not wounded affection alone, nor insulted pride, nor startled parsimony, that had carried the fury of the Queen

[1] Parma to Philip II. 19 April, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

The contemporary historians of the country do not paint more frightful pictures of the desolation of Antwerp, and of the obedient Provinces generally, than those furnished by the Prince of Parma in his secret letters to his sovereign. Compare Bor, II. 984; Meteren, xiii. 253vo; Hoofd, Vervolgh, 251, *et mult. al.*

"Grandissima lastima," said Farnese of Antwerp, "ver perdida tan principal villa, y la navigacion de ribera tan linda y provechosa no solo para el pais mas para todo el mundo." MS. before cited.

[2] Letter to Philip II. just cited.

[3] "No podreys pensar el contento que me ha dado el aviso de la frequencia que huvo a los sacramentos la pasqua pasada," &c. Philip II. to Parma, 5 July, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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to such a height on the occasion of Leicester's elevation to absolute government. It was still more, because the step was thought likely to interfere with the progress of those negociations into which the Queen had allowed herself to be drawn.

A certain Grafigni—a Genoese merchant residing much in London and in Antwerp, a meddling, intrusive, and irresponsible kind of individual, whose occupation was gone with the cessation of Flemish trade—had recently made his appearance as a volunteer diplomatist. The principal reason for accepting or rather for winking at his services, seemed to be the possibility of disavowing him, on both sides, whenever it should be thought advisable. He had a partner or colleague, too, named Bodman, who seemed a not much more creditable negociator than himself. The chief director of the intrigue was, however, Champagny, brother of Cardinal Granvelle, restored to the King's favour and disposed to atone by his exuberant loyalty for his heroic patriotism on a former and most memorable occasion.[1] Andrea de Loo, another subordinate politician, was likewise employed at various stages of the negociation.

It will soon be perceived that the part enacted by Burghley, Hatton, Croft, and other counsellors, and even by the Queen herself, was not a model of ingenuousness towards the absent Leicester and the States-General. The gentlemen sent at various times to and from the Earl and her Majesty's government,—Davison, Shirley, Vavasor, Heneage, and the rest,—had all expressed themselves in the strongest language concerning the good faith and the friendliness of the Lord-Treasurer and the Vice-Chamberlain,[2] but they were not so well informed as they would have been, had they seen the private letters of Parma to Philip II.

Walsingham, although kept in the dark as much as it was possible, discovered from time to time the mysterious practices of his political antagonists, and warned the Queen of the

[1] In the memorable Antwerp fury. See 'Rise of the Dutch Republic,' vol. iii. chap. .

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' pp. 112, 124, 143, 161, 176, 231. Leicester to Burghley, 18 March, 1586, (S. P. Office MS.)

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danger and dishonour she was bringing upon herself.[1] Elizabeth, when thus boldly charged, equivocated and stormed alternately. She authorized Walsingham to communicate the secrets—which he had thus surprised—to the States-General, and then denied having given any such orders.[2]

In truth, Walsingham was only entrusted with such portions of the negotiations as he had been able, by his own astuteness, to divine; and as he was very much a friend to the Provinces and to Leicester, he never failed to keep them instructed, to the best of his ability. It must be confessed, however, that the shuffling and paltering among great men and little men, at that period, forms a somewhat painful subject of contemplation at the present day.

Grafigni having some merchandise to convey from Antwerp to London, went early in the year to the Prince of Parma, at Brussels, in order to procure a passport.[3] They entered into some conversation upon the misery of the country, and particularly concerning the troubles to which the unfortunate merchants had been exposed. Alexander expressed much sympathy with the commercial community, and a strong desire that the ancient friendship between his master and the Queen of England might be restored. Grafigni assured the Prince—as the result of his own observation in England—that the Queen participated in those pacific sentiments. "You are going to England," replied the Prince, "and you may say to the ministers of her Majesty, that, after my allegiance to my King, I am most favourably and affectionately inclined towards her. If it pleases them that I, *as Alexander Farnese*, should attempt to bring about an accord, and if our commissioners could be assured of a hearing in England, I would take care that everything should be conducted with due regard to the honour and reputation of her Majesty."[4]

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 231 $\frac{21 \text{ April}}{1 \text{ May}}$ 1586; 272, $\frac{29}{30}$ May, 1586.

[2] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 240, $\frac{26 \text{ April}}{6 \text{ May}}$ 1586. Ibid. 272, $\frac{29}{30}$ May, 1586.

[3] Copia del Papel de Agostino Grafigna, anno 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[4] Ibid. "Che io, como Alessandro Farnese, praticassi a pico d' accordo con mio Re, y che li nostri commessi fussino sentiti in Ingleterra, tenirei modo che le cose passeriano con ogni honore & reputazione di S. Mª.," &c.

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Grafigni then asked for a written letter of credence. "That cannot be," replied Alexander; "but if you return to me I shall believe your report, and then a proper person can be sent, with authority from the King to treat with her Majesty."[1]

Grafigni proceeded to England, and had an interview with Lord Cobham. A few days later that nobleman gave the merchant a general assurance that the Queen had always felt a strong inclination to maintain firm friendship with the House of Burgundy. Nevertheless, as he proceeded to state, the bad policy of the King's ministers, and the enterprises against her Majesty, had compelled her to provide for her own security and that of her realm by remedies differing in spirit from that good inclination. Being however a Christian princess, willing to leave vengeance to the Lord and disposed to avoid bloodshed, she was ready to lend her ear to a negotiation for peace, if it were likely to be a sincere and secure one. Especially she was pleased that his Highness of Parma should act as mediator of such a treaty, as she considered him a most just and honourable prince in all his promises and actions. Her Majesty would accordingly hold herself in readiness to receive the honourable commissioners alluded to, feeling sure that every step taken by his Highness would comport with her honour and safety.[2]

At about the same time the other partner in this diplomatic enterprise, William Bodman, communicated to Alexander the result of his observations in England. He stated that Lords Burghley, Buckhurst, and Cobham, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Comptroller Croft, were secretly desirous of peace with Spain, and that they had seized the recent *opportunity of her pique against the Earl of Leicester*[3] to urge forward these underhand negotiations. Some progress had been made; but as no accredited commissioner arrived from the Prince of

[1] Copia del Papel de Agostino Grafigna, MS. just cited.

[2] Papel de Grafigna, MS. before cited.

[3] "Algun disgusto contra el Conde de Lester," &c., from a document entitled 'Lo que en particular siento Guillemo Bodeman de las intenciones de Inglaterra, anno 1586.' (Archivo de Simancas, MS.)

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Parma, and as Leicester was continually writing earnest letters against peace, the efforts of these counsellors had slackened. Bodman found them all, on his arrival, anxious as he said, "to get their necks out of the matter;"[1] declaring everything which had been done to be pure matter of accident, entirely without the concurrence of the Queen, and each seeking to outrival the other in the good graces of her Majesty.[2] Grafigni informed Bodman, however, that Lord Cobham was quite to be depended upon in the affair, and would deal with him privately; while Lord Burghley would correspond with Andrea de Loo at Antwerp. Moreover, the servant of Comptroller Croft would direct Bodman as to his course, and would give him daily instructions.[3]

Now it so happened that this servant of Croft, Norris by name, was a Papist, a man of bad character, and formerly a spy of the Duke of Anjou.[4] "If your Lordship or myself should use such instruments as this," wrote Walsingham to Leicester, "I know we should bear no small reproach; but it is the good hap of hollow and doubtful men to be best thought of."[5] Bodman thought the lords of the peace-faction and their adherents not sufficiently strong to oppose the other party with success. He assured Farnese that almost all the *gentlemen and the common people of England stood ready to risk* their fortunes and to go in person to the field to maintain the cause of the Queen and religious liberty; and that the chance of peace was desperate unless something should turn the tide, such as, for example, the defeat of Drake, or an invasion by Philip of Ireland or Scotland.[6]

As it so happened that Drake was just then engaged in a magnificent career of victory, sweeping the Spanish Main and startling the nearest and the most remote possessions of the King with English prowess, his defeat was not one of the cards to be relied on by the peace-party in the somewhat deceptive game which they had commenced. Yet, strange to

[1] "Sacar el cuello y salirse a fuera." (Ibid.)
[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 231, $\frac{21 \text{ April}}{1 \text{ May}}$, 1586.
[5] Ibid.
[6] "Lo que en particular siente G. Bodeman, &c. MS. last cited.

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say, they used, or attempted to use, those splendid triumphs as if they had been disasters.

Meantime there was an active but very secret correspondence between Lord Cobham, Lord Burghley, Sir James Croft, and various subordinate personages in England, on the one side, and Champagny, President Richardot, La Motte, governor of Gravelines, Andrea de Loo, Grafigni, and other men in the obedient Provinces, more or less in Alexander's confidence, on the other side. Each party was desirous of forcing or wheedling the antagonist to show his hand. "You were employed to take soundings off the English coast in the Duke of Norfolk's time," said Cobham to La Motte: "you remember the Duke's fate. Nevertheless, her Majesty hates war, and it only depends on the King to have a firm and lasting peace."[1]

"You must tell Lord Cobham," said Richardot to La Motte, "that you are not at liberty to go into a correspondence, until assured of the intentions of Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty ought to speak first, in order to make her good-will manifest,"[2] and so on.

"The *'friend'* can confer with you," said Richardot to Champagny; "but his Highness is not to appear to know anything at all about it. The Queen must signify her intentions."[3]

"You answered Champagny correctly," said Burghley to De Loo, "as to what I said last winter concerning her Majesty's wishes in regard to a pacification. *The Netherlands must be compelled to return to obedience to the King;* but their ancient privileges are to be maintained. You omitted, however, to say a word about toleration, in the Provinces, of the reformed religion. But I said then, as I say now, that this is a condition indispensable to peace."[4]

This was a somewhat important omission on the part of De

[1] Lord Cobham to Sigr. de la Motte, 2 March, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[2] Richardot to La Motte, 23 March, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[3] Richardot to Champagny, 24 March, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[4] 'Lettera del Sr. Gran Thesoriero d' Ingleterra a Andrea de Loo, verbatim translatata dalla sua lingua in questra, 6 Marte, 1586. (Arch. de Sim MS.)

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Loo, and gives the measure of his conscientiousness or his capacity as a negotiator. Certainly for the Lord-Treasurer of England to offer, on the part of her Majesty, to bring about the reduction of her allies under the yoke which they had thrown off without her assistance, and this without leave asked of them, and with no provision for the great principle of religious liberty, which was the cause of the revolt, was a most flagitious trifling with the honour of Elizabeth and of England. Certainly the more this mysterious correspondence is examined, the more conclusive is the justification of the vague and instinctive jealousy felt by Leicester and the States-General as to English diplomacy during the winter and spring of 1586.

Burghley summoned De Loo, accordingly, to recall to his memory all that had been privately said to him on the necessity of protecting the reformed religion in the Provinces. If a peace were to be perpetual, toleration was indispensable, he observed, and her Majesty was said to desire this condition most earnestly.[1]

The Lord-Treasurer also made the not unreasonable suggestion, that, in case of a pacification, it would be necessary to provide that English subjects—peaceful traders, mariners, and the like—should no longer be shut up in the Inquisition-prisons of Spain and Portugal, and there starved to death, as, with great multitudes, had already been the case.[2]

Meantime Alexander, while encouraging and directing all these underhand measures, was carefully impressing upon his master that he was not, in the least degree, bound by any such negotiations. "Queen Elizabeth," he correctly observed to Philip, "is a woman: she is also by no means fond of expense. The kingdom, accustomed to repose, is already weary of war: therefore, they are all pacifically inclined."[3] "It has been intimated to me," he said, "that if I would send a properly qualified person, who should declare that your Majesty had

[1] 'Lettera, &c., just cited.

[2] Ibid.

[3] "La reyna, por ser muger, y sentir el gasto que la combiene hacer, y cansarse aquel Reyno acostumbrado a su reposo," &c. Parma to Philip II. 30 Mar. 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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not absolutely forbidden the coming of Lord Leicester, such an agent would be well received, and perhaps *the Earl would be recalled.*"[1] Alexander then proceeded, with the coolness befitting a trusted governor of Philip II., to comment upon the course which he was pursuing. He could at any time denounce the negotiations which he was secretly prompting. Meantime immense advantages could be obtained by the deception practised upon an enemy whose own object was to deceive.

The deliberate treachery of the scheme was cynically enlarged upon, and its possible results mathematically calculated. Philip was to proceed with the invasion while Alexander was going on with the negotiation. If, meanwhile, they could receive back Holland and Zeeland from the hands of England, that would be an immense success.[2] The Prince intimated a doubt, however, as to so fortunate a result, because, in dealing with heretics and persons of similar quality, nothing but trickery was to be expected. The chief good to be hoped for was to "chill the Queen in her plots, leagues, and alliances, and during the chill, to carry forward their own great design."[3] To slacken not a whit in their preparations, to "put the Queen to sleep,"[4] and, *above all, not to leave the French for a moment unoccupied with internal dissensions and civil war;* such was the game of the King and the governor, as expounded between themselves.[5]

President Richardot, at the same time, stated to Cardinal Granvelle that the English desire for peace was considered certain at Brussels. Grafigni had informed the Prince of Parma and his counsellors that the Queen was most amicably disposed, and that there would be no trouble on the point of religion, her Majesty not wishing to obtain more than she would herself be willing to grant. "In this," said Richardot, "there is both hard and soft;"[6] for knowing that the Spanish

[1] Parma to Philip II., MS. last cited.
[2] Ibid.
[3] "Que haya de serbir mas para enfriarla en sus tramas, ligas, y adherencias," &c. (Ibid.)
[4] "Para adormecerla." (Ibid.)
[5] Ibid.
[6] "En cecy il y a du dur & du mol." Richardot to Granvelle, 30 Mars, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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game was deception, pure and simple, the excellent President could not bring himself to suspect a possible grain of good faith in the English intentions. Much anxiety was perpetually felt in the French quarter, her Majesty's government being supposed to be secretly preparing an invasion of the obedient Netherlands across the French frontier, in combination, not with the Béarnese, but with Henry III. So much in the dark were even the most astute politicians. "I can't feel satisfied in this French matter," said the President: "we mustn't tickle ourselves to make ourselves laugh."[1] Moreover, there was no self-deception nor self-tickling possible as to the unmitigated misery of the obedient Netherlands. Famine was a more formidable foe than Frenchmen, Hollanders, and Englishmen combined; so that Richardot avowed that the "negotiation would be indeed holy," if it would restore Holland and Zeeland to the King without fighting. The prospect seemed on the whole rather dismal to loyal Netherlanders like the old leaguing, intriguing, Hispaniolized president of the privy council. "I confess," said he plaintively, "that England needs chastisement; but I don't see how we are to give it to her. Only let us secure Holland and Zeeland, and then we shall always find a stick whenever we like to beat the dog."[2]

Meantime Andrea de Loo had been bustling and buzzing about the ears of the chief counsellors at the English court during all the early spring. Most busily he had been endeavouring to efface the prevalent suspicion that Philip and Alexander were only trifling by these informal negotiations. We have just seen whether or not there was ground for that suspicion. De Loo, being importunate, however—"as he usually was," according to his own statement—obtained in Burghley's hand a confirmation, by order of the Queen, of De Loo's letter of the 26th December. The matter of religion

[1] Il ne faut pas que nous nous chatouillons pour nous faire rire." (Ib.) Neither Richardot nor Parma himself could then foresee that within two months Henry III. would be proposing to Philip II. a joint invasion of England!

[2] "Et nous sera aysé de trouver le baston quand nous voulons battre le chien." (Ibid.)

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gave the worthy merchant much difficulty, and he begged Lord Buckhurst, the Lord Treasurer, and many other counsellors, not to allow this point of toleration to ruin the whole affair; "for," said he, "his Majesty will never permit any exercise of the reformed religion."[1]

At last Buckhurst sent for him, and in presence of Comptroller Croft, gave him information that he had brought the Queen to this conclusion: firstly, that she would be satisfied with as great a proportion of religious toleration for Holland, Zeeland, and the other United Provinces, as his Majesty could concede with safety to his conscience and his honour;[2] secondly, that she required an act of amnesty; thirdly, that she claimed reimbursement by Philip for the money advanced by her to the States.[3]

Certainly a more wonderful claim was never made than this—a demand upon an absolute monarch for indemnity for expenses incurred in fomenting a rebellion of his own subjects. The measure of toleration proposed for the Provinces—the conscience, namely, of the greatest bigot ever born into the world—was likely to prove as satisfactory as the claim for damages propounded by the most parsimonious sovereign in Christendom. It was, however, stipulated that the non-conformists of Holland and Zeeland, who should be forced into exile, were to have their property administered by papist trustees; and further, that the Spanish inquisition was not to be established in the Netherlands. Philip could hardly demand better terms than these last, after a career of victory. That they should be offered now by Elizabeth was hardly compatible with good faith to the States.

On account of Lord Burghley's gout, it was suggested that the negotiators had better meet in England, as it would be necessary for him to take the lead in the matter, and as he was but an indifferent traveller. Thus, according to De Loo,

1 Memorial d' Andrea de Loo del negotiato alla corte d' Inglaterra nel mese di Febraio e Marzo, 1586. (Archivo de Simancas, MS.)

2 "Imprimis, che S. M^ta si contenta di non estar altrimenti sul punto della religione che d' ottenere dal Re quella tanta tolerantia per la Hollanda y la Zelanda con le altre provincie unite, che potra concedere con sua salva conscienza et honore." (Ibid.)

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

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the Queen was willing to hand over the United Provinces to Philip, and to toss religious toleration to the winds, if she could only get back the seventy thousand pounds—more or less—which she had invested in an unpromising speculation. A few weeks later, and at almost the very moment when Elizabeth had so suddenly overturned her last vial of wrath upon the discomfited Heneage for having communicated—according to her express command—the fact of the pending negotiations to the Netherland States; at that very instant Parma was writing secretly, and in cipher, to Philip. His communication—could Sir Thomas have read it—might have partly explained her Majesty's rage.

Parma had heard, he said, through Bodman, from Comptroller Croft, that the Queen would willingly receive a proper envoy. It was very easy to see, he observed, that the English counsellors were seeking every means of entering into communication with Spain, and that they were doing so with the participation of the Queen.[1] Lord-Treasurer Burghley and Comptroller Croft had expressed surprise that the Prince had not yet sent a secret agent to her Majesty, under pretext of demanding explanations concerning Lord Leicester's presence in the Provinces, but in reality to treat for peace. Such an agent, it had been intimated, would be well received.[2] The Lord-Treasurer and the Comptroller would do all in their power to advance the negotiation, so that, with their aid and with the pacific inclination of the Queen, the measures proposed in favour of Leicester would be suspended, and perhaps the Earl himself and all the English would be recalled.[3]

The Queen was further represented as taking great pains to excuse both the expedition of Sir Francis Drake to the Indies, and the mission of Leicester to the Provinces. She was said to throw the whole blame of these enterprises upon Walsing-

1 "Bien claro echa de ver que van buscando todos los que les parecen a proposito para entrar en comunicacion, y que lo hazen con la participacion de la Reyna." Parma to Philip II. 19 April, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

2 Ibid.

"3 Y con esto y la inclinacion que tiene la Reyna á la paz, se suspenderian las proposiciones que se hazen en favor del Conde de Lestre, y quiza seria revocado el con todos los Ingleses." (Ibid.)

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ham and other ill-intentioned personages, and to avow that she now understood matters better; so that, if Parma would at once send an envoy, peace would, without question, soon be made.[1]

Parma had expressed his gratification at these hopeful dispositions on the part of Burghley and Croft, and held out hopes of sending an agent to treat with them, if not directly with her Majesty. For some time past—according to the Prince—the English government had not seemed to be honestly seconding the Earl of Leicester, nor to correspond with his desires. "This makes me think," he said, "that the counsellors before-mentioned, being his rivals, are trying to trip him up."[2]

In such a caballing, prevaricating age, it is difficult to know which of all the plotters and counterplotters engaged in these intrigues could accomplish the greatest amount of what —for the sake of diluting in nine syllables that which could be more forcibly expressed in one—was then called diplomatic dissimulation. It is to be feared, notwithstanding her frequent and vociferous denials, that the robes of the "imperial votaress" were not so unsullied as could be wished. We know how loudly Leicester had complained—we have seen how clearly Walsingham could convict; but Elizabeth, though convicted, could always confute: for an absolute sovereign, even without resorting to Philip's syllogisms of axe and faggot, was apt in the sixteenth century to have the best of an argument with private individuals.

The secret statements of Parma—made, not for public effect, but for the purpose of furnishing his master with the most accurate information he could gather as to English policy—are certainly entitled to consideration. They were doubtless founded upon the statements of individuals rejoicing in no very elevated character; but those individuals had no motive

[1] "Esmerando se mucho en excusar la Reyna assi de la yda de Drake a las Indias como de la venida de Lecester, echando la culpa a Walsingham y a otros mal intencionados, y que ya la Reyna comenzava a conocerlo," &c. (Ibid.)

[2] "Que estos, como sus contrarios, deven de yrle a la mano," &c. (Ibid.)

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to deceive their patron. If they clashed with the vehement declarations of very eminent personages, it must be admitted, on the other hand, that they were singularly in accordance with the silent eloquence of important and mysterious events.

As to Alexander Farnese—without deciding the question whether Elizabeth and Burghley were deceiving Walsingham and Leicester, or only trying to delude Philip and himself—he had no hesitation, of course, on his part, in recommending to Philip the employment of unlimited dissimulation. Nothing could be more ingenuous than the intercourse between the King and his confidential advisers. It was perfectly understood among them that they were always to deceive every one, upon every occasion. Only let them be false, and it was impossible to be wholly wrong; but grave mistakes might occur from occasional deviations into sincerity. It was no question at all, therefore, that it was Parma's duty to delude Elizabeth and Burghley. Alexander's course was plain. He informed his master that he would keep these difficulties alive as much as it was possible. In order to "put them all to sleep with regard to the great enterprise of the invasion,"[1] he would send back Bodman to Burghley and Croft, and thus keep this unofficial negotiation upon its legs. The King was quite uncommitted, and could always disavow what had been done. Meanwhile he was gaining, and his adversaries losing, much precious time. "If by this course," said Parma, "we can induce the English to hand over to us the places which they hold in Holland and Zeeland, that will be a great triumph." Accordingly he urged the King not to slacken, in the least, his preparations for invasion, and, above all, to have a care that the French were kept entangled and embarrassed among themselves, which was a most substantial point.[2]

Meantime Europe was ringing with the American successes of the bold corsair Drake. San Domingo, Porto Rico, San-

[1] "Per endormecerlos por lo que toca al negocio principal." (Ibid.)

[2] "Que los franceses se entretengan embaraçados entre se, que es punto sustancialissimo." (Ibid.)

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tiago, Carthagena, Florida, were sacked and destroyed, and the supplies drawn so steadily from the oppression of the Western World to maintain Spanish tyranny in Europe, were for a time extinguished. Parma was appalled at these triumphs of the Sea-King—"a fearful man to the King of Spain"[1]—as Lord Burghley well observed. The Spanish troops were starving in Flanders, all Flanders itself was starving, and Philip, as usual, had sent but insignificant remittances to save his perishing soldiers. Parma had already exhausted his credit. Money was most difficult to obtain in such a forlorn country; and now the few rich merchants and bankers of Antwerp that were left looked very black at these crushing news from America. "They are drawing their purse-strings very tight," said Alexander, "and will make no accommodation. The most contemplative of them ponder much over this success of Drake, and think that your Majesty will forget our matters here altogether."[2] For this reason he informed the King that it would be advisable to drop all further negotiation with England for the time, as it was hardly probable that, with such advantages gained by the Queen, she would be inclined to proceed in the path which had been just secretly opened.[3] Moreover, the Prince was in a state of alarm as to the intentions of France. Mendoza and Tassis had given him to understand that a very good feeling prevailed between the court of Henry and of Elizabeth, and that the French were likely to come to a pacification among themselves.[4] In this the Spanish envoys were hardly anticipating so great an effect as we have seen that they had the right to do from their own indefatigable exertions; for, thanks to their zeal, backed by the moderate subsidies furnished by their master, the civil war in France already seemed likely to be as enduring as that of the Netherlands. But Parma—still quite in the dark as to French politics—was haunted by the vision of seventy thousand foot and six thousand horse[5] ready

[1] Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 199, 21 March / 10 April, 1586.

[2] Parma to Philip II. 9 May, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

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to be let slip upon him at any moment, out of a pacified and harmonious France; while he had nothing but a few starving and crippled regiments to withstand such an invasion. When all these events should have taken place, and France, in alliance with England, should have formally declared war against Spain, Alexander protested that he should have learned nothing new.[1]

The Prince was somewhat mistaken as to political affairs; but his doubts concerning his neighbours, blended with the forlorn condition of himself and army, about which there was no doubt at all, showed the exigencies of his situation. In the midst of such embarrassments it is impossible not to admire his heroism as a military chieftain, and his singular adroitness as a diplomatist. He had painted for his sovereign a most faithful and horrible portrait of the obedient Provinces. The soil was untilled; the manufactories had all stopped; trade had ceased to exist. It was a pity only to look upon the raggedness of his soldiers. No language could describe the misery of the reconciled Provinces—Artois, Hainault, Flanders. The condition of Bruges would melt the hardest heart; other cities were no better; Antwerp was utterly ruined; its inhabitants were all starving. The famine throughout the obedient Netherlands was such as had not been known for a century. The whole country had been picked bare by the troops, and the plough was not put into the ground. Deputations were constantly with him from Bruges, Dendermonde, Bois-le-Duc, Brussels, Antwerp, Nymegen, proving to him by the most palpable evidence that the whole population of those cities had almost literally nothing to eat. He had nothing, however, but exhortations to patience to feed them withal. He was left without a groat even to save his soldiers from starving, and he wildly and bitterly, day after day, implored his sovereign for aid.[2] These pictures are not the sketches of a historian striving for effect, but literal transcripts from the most secret revelations of the Prince himself

[1] Parma to Philip II., MS. just cited.
[2] Letters of Parma to Philip II. 19 April, 1586; 9 May, 1586; 27 May, 1586, *et al.* (Arch. de Sim. MSS.)

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to his sovereign. On the other hand, although Leicester's complaints of the destitution of the English troops in the republic were almost as bitter, yet the condition of the United Provinces was comparatively healthy. Trade, external and internal, was increasing daily. Distant commercial and military expeditions were fitted out, manufactures were prosperous, and the war of independence was gradually becoming—strange to say—a source of prosperity to the new commonwealth.

Philip—being now less alarmed than his nephew concerning French affairs, and not feeling so keenly the misery of the obedient Provinces, or the wants of the Spanish army—sent to Alexander six hundred thousand ducats by way of Genoa. In the letter submitted by his secretary recording this remittance, the King made, however, a characteristic marginal note:—"See if it will not be as well to tell him something concerning the two hundred thousand ducats to be deducted for Mucio, for fear of more mischief, if the Prince should expect the whole six hundred thousand."[1]

Accordingly Mucio got the two hundred thousand. One-third of the meagre supply destined for the relief of the King's starving and valiant little army in the Netherlands was cut off to go into the pockets of the intriguing Duke of Guise. "We must keep the French," said Philip, "in a state of confusion at home, and feed their civil war. We must not allow them to come to a general peace, which would be destruction for the Catholics. I know you will put a good face on the matter; and, after all, 'tis in the interest of the Netherlands. Moreover, the money shall be immediately refunded."[2]

Alexander was more likely to make a wry face, notwithstanding his views of the necessity of fomenting the rebellion

[1] "Mirad si es bien decirle algo de los 200m ducados para Mucio, en caso que sean menester—porque despues no se haga mas de mal, esperando todos 600m." Philip II. to Parma, 14 May, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[2] "Sustentando los (franceses) el ruido en su casa, y no les dejando conseguir la paz general, que no ha de ser sino destruccion de los Catholicos," &c. (Ibid.)

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against the House of Valois. Certainly if a monarch intended to conquer such countries as France, England, and Holland, without stirring from his easy chair in the Escorial, it would have been at least as well—so Alexander thought—to invest a little more capital in the speculation. No monarch ever dreamed of arriving at universal empire with less personal fatigue or exposure, or at a cheaper rate, than did Philip II. His only fatigue was at his writing-table. But even here his merit was of a subordinate description. He sat a great while at a time. He had a genius for sitting; but he now wrote few letters himself. A dozen words or so, scrawled in hieroglyphics at the top, bottom, or along the margin of the interminable despatches of his secretaries, contained the suggestions, more or less luminous, which arose in his mind concerning public affairs. But he held firmly to his purpose. He had devoted his life to the extermination of Protestantism, to the conquest of France and England, to the subjugation of Holland. These were vast schemes. A King who should succeed in such enterprises, by his personal courage and genius, at the head of his armies, or by consummate diplomacy, or by a masterly system of finance—husbanding and concentrating the resources of his almost boundless realms—might be in truth commended for capacity. Hitherto however Philip's triumph had seemed problematical; and perhaps something more would be necessary than letters to Parma, and paltry remittances to Mucio, notwithstanding Alexander's splendid but local victories in Flanders.

Parma, although in reality almost at bay, concealed his despair, and accomplished wonders in the field. The military events during the spring and summer of 1586 will be sketched in a subsequent chapter. For the present it is necessary to combine into a complete whole the subterranean negotiations between Brussels and England.

Much to his surprise and gratification, Parma found that the peace-party were not inclined to change their views in consequence of the triumphs of Drake. He soon informed the King that—according to Champagny and Bodman—the

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Lord Treasurer, the Comptroller, Lord Cobham, and Sir Christopher Hatton, were more pacific than they had ever been. These four were represented by Grafigni as secretly in league against Leicester and Walsingham, and very anxious to bring about a reconciliation between the crowns of England and Spain.[1] The merchant-diplomatist, according to his own statement, was expressly sent by Queen Elizabeth to the Prince of Parma, although without letter of credence or signed instructions, but with the full knowledge and approbation of the four counsellors just mentioned. He assured Alexander that the Queen and the majority of her council felt a strong desire for peace, and had *manifested much repentance for what had been done.*[2] They had explained their proceedings by the necessity of self-defence. They had avowed—in case they should be made sure of peace—that they should, not with reluctance and against their will, but, on the contrary, with the utmost alacrity and at once, surrender to the King of Spain the territory which they possessed in the Netherlands, and especially the fortified towns in Holland and Zeeland ;[3] for the English object had never been conquest. Parma had also been informed of the Queen's strong desire that he should be employed as negotiator, on account of her great confidence in his sincerity. They had expressed much satisfaction on hearing that he was about to send an agent to England, and had protested themselves rejoiced at Drake's triumphs, only because of their hope that a peace with Spain would thus be rendered the easier of accomplishment. They were much afraid, according to Grafigni, of Philip's power, and dreaded a Spanish invasion of their country, in conjunction with the Pope. They were now extremely anxious that Parma—as he himself informed the King—should send an agent of good capacity, in great secrecy, to England.

[1] Parma to Philip II., 11 June, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[2] "La inclinacion y deseo que tiene la Reyna y la mayor parte de su consejo de la paz, y de acomodarse con V. M., y del *arrepentimento que muestran de lo hecho.*" (Ibid.)

[3] "Antes, se allanaran en volver y entregar a V. M^d. lo que ocupan y poseen y en particular las fuerzas de Holanda y Zeelanda," &c. (Ibid.)

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The Comptroller had said that he had pledged himself to such a result, and if it failed, that they would probably cut off his head.[1] The four counsellors were excessively solicitous for the negotiation, and each of them was expecting to gain favour by advancing it to the best of his ability.

Parma hinted at the possibility that all these professions were false, and that the English were only intending to keep the King from the contemplated invasion. At the same time he drew Philip's attention to *the fact that Burghley and his party had most evidently been doing everything in their power to obstruct Leicester's progress in the Netherlands and to keep back the reinforcements of troops and money which he so much required.*[2]

No doubt these communications of Parma to the King were made upon the faith of an agent not over-scrupulous, and of no elevated or recognised rank in diplomacy. It must be borne in mind, however, that he had been made use of by both parties; perhaps because it would be easy to throw off, and discredit, him whenever such a step should be convenient; and that, on the other hand, coming fresh from Burghley and the rest into the presence of the keen-eyed Farnese, he would hardly invent for his employer a budget of falsehoods. That man must have been a subtle negotiator who could outwit such a statesman as Burghley and the other counsellors of Elizabeth, and a bold one who could dare to trifle on a momentous occasion with Alexander of Parma.

Leicester thought Burghley very much his friend, and so thought Davison and Heneage; and the Lord-Treasurer had, in truth, stood stoutly by the Earl in the affair of the absolute governorship;—"a matter more severe and cumbersome to him and others," said Burghley, "than any whatsoever since he was a counsellor."[3] But there is no doubt that these negotiations were going forward all the spring and summer, that they were most detrimental to Leicester's success, and that they were kept—so far as it was possible—a profound

[1] "Que le corten la cabeza." Parma to Philip II., MS. just cited. [2] Ibid.
[3] 'Leyc. Corresp., 268, $\frac{13}{23}$ May, 1586.

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secret from him, from Walsingham, and from the States-General. Nothing was told them except what their own astuteness had discovered beforehand; and the game of the counsellors—so far as their attitude towards Leicester and Walsingham was concerned—seems both disingenuous and impolitic.

Parma, it was to be feared, was more than a match for the English governor-general in the field; and it was certainly hopeless for poor old Comptroller Croft, even though backed by the sagacious Burghley, to accomplish so great an amount of dissimulation in a year as the Spanish cabinet, without effort, could compass in a week. Nor were they attempting to do so. It is probable that England was acting towards Philip in much better faith than he deserved, or than Parma believed; but it is hardly to be wondered at that Leicester should think himself injured by being kept perpetually in the dark.

Elizabeth was very impatient at not receiving direct letters from Parma, and her anxiety on the subject explains much of her caprice during the quarrel about the governor-generalship. Many persons in the Netherlands thought those violent scenes a farce, and a farce that had been arranged with Leicester beforehand. In this they were mistaken; for an examination of the secret correspondence of the period reveals the motives—which to contemporaries were hidden—of many strange transactions. The Queen was, no doubt, extremely anxious, and with cause, at the tempest slowly gathering over her head; but the more the dangers thickened, the more was her own official language to those in high places befitting the sovereign of England.

She expressed her surprise to Farnese that he had not written to her on the subject of the Grafigni and Bodman affair. The first, she said, was justified in all which he had narrated, save in his assertion that she had sent him. The other had not obtained audience, because he had not come provided with any credentials, direct or indirect. Having now understood from Andrea de Loo and the Seigneur de Cham-

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pagny that Parma had the power to conclude a peace, which he seemed very much to desire, she observed that it was not necessary for him to be so chary in explaining the basis of the proposed negotiations. It was better to enter into a straightforward path, than by ambiguous words to spin out to great length matters which princes should at once conclude.[1]

"Do not suppose," said the Queen, "that I am seeking what belongs to others. God forbid. I seek only that which is mine own. But be sure that I will take good heed of the sword which threatens me with destruction, nor think that I am so craven-spirited as to endure a wrong, or to place myself at the mercy of my enemy. Every week I see advertisements and letters from Spain that this year shall witness the downfall of England; for the Spaniards—like the hunter who divided, with great liberality, among his friends the body and limbs of the wolf, before it had been killed—have partitioned this kingdom and that of Ireland before the conquest has been effected. But my royal heart is no whit appalled by such threats.[2] I trust, with the help of the Divine hand—which has thus far miraculously preserved me—to smite all these braggart powers into the dust, and to preserve my honour, and the kingdoms which He has given me for my heritage.

"Nevertheless, if you have authority to enter upon and to conclude this negotiation, you will find my ears open to hear your propositions; and I tell you further, if a peace is to be made, that I wish you to be the mediator thereof. Such is the affection I bear you, notwithstanding that some letters, written by your own hand, might easily have effaced such sentiments from my mind."[3]

Soon afterwards, Bodman was again despatched to England, Grafigni being already there. He was provided with unsigned instructions, according to which he was to say that the Prince, having heard of the Queen's good intentions, had

[1] Queen Elizabeth to Prince of Parma, without date. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

[2] "Non resta che'l mi curore regale sia punto sbigottito do queste minaccie," &c. (Ibid.)

[3] Ibid.

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despatched him and Grafigni to her court. They were to listen to any suggestions made by the Queen to her ministers; but they were to do nothing but listen. If the counsellors should enter into their grievances against his Majesty, and ask for explanations, the agents were to say that they had no authority or instructions to speak for so great and Christian a monarch. Thus they were to cut the thread of any such discourse, or any other observations not to the purpose.[1]

Silence, in short, was recommended, first and last, as the one great business of their mission; and it was unlucky that men whose talent for taciturnity was thus signally relied upon should be somewhat remarkable for loquacity. Grafigni was also the bearer of a letter from Alexander to the Queen—of which Bodman received a copy—but it was strictly enjoined upon them to keep the letter, their instructions, and the objects of their journey, a secret from all the world.[2]

The letter of the Prince consisted mainly of complimentary flourishes. He had heard, he said, all that Agostino Grafigni had communicated, and he now begged her Majesty to let him understand the course which it was proper to take; assuring her of his gratitude for her good opinion touching his sincerity, and his desire to save the effusion of blood, and so on; concluding of course with expressions of most profound consideration and devotion.[3]

Early in July Bodman arrived in London. He found Grafigni in very low spirits. He had been with Lord Cobham, and was much disappointed with his reception, for Cobham—angry that Grafigni had brought no commission from the King—had refused to receive Parma's letter to the Queen, and had expressed annoyance that Bodman should be employed on this mission, having heard that he was very ill-tempered and passionate. The same evening, he had been sent for by

[1] Instruzione embiada á Gulielmo Bodeman, 20 June, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.) "Cortando el hilo a la platica y discursos como a todos los demas que no hacen a proposito," &c.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Parma to Queen Elizabeth, 20 June, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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Lord Burghley—who had accepted the letter for her Majesty without saying a word—and on the following morning, he had been taken to task by several counsellors, on the ground that the Prince, in that communication, had stated that the Queen had expressed a desire for peace.[1]

It has just been shown that there was no such intimation at all in the letter; but as neither Grafigni nor Bodman had read the epistle itself, but only the copy furnished them, they could merely say that such an assertion, if made by the Prince, had been founded on no statement of theirs. Bodman consoled his colleague, as well as he could, by assurances that when the letter was fairly produced, their vindication would be complete, and Grafigni, upon that point, was comforted. He was, however, very doleful in general, and complained bitterly of Burghley and the other English counsellors. He said that they had forced him, against his will, to make this journey to Brussels, that they had offered him presents, that they would leave him no rest in his own house, but had made him neglect all his private business, and caused him a great loss of time and money, in order that he might serve them. They had manifested the strongest desire that Parma should open this communication, and had led him to expect a very large recompense for his share in the transaction. "And now," said Grafigni to his colleague, with great bitterness, "I find no faith nor honour in them at all. They don't keep their word, and every one of them is trying to slide out of the very business, in which each was, but the other day, striving to outrival the other, in order that it might be brought to a satisfactory conclusion."[2]

After exploding in this way to Bodman, he went back to Cobham, and protested, with angry vehemence, that Parma had never written such a word to the Queen, and that so it would prove, if the letter were produced.

[1] 'Relacion de lo sucedido en Inglaterra a G. Bodeman con los señores de aquel consejo,' &c., 30 July, 1586.

[2] Ibid. "No hallaba fé, palabra, ni honra entre ellos, porque cada uno queria salirse afuera que de antes estribaban quien primero lo podria acabar." (Ibid.)

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Next day, Bodman was sent for to Greenwich, where her Majesty was, as usual, residing. A secret pavilion was indicated to him, where he was to stay until sunset. When that time arrived, Lord Cobham's secretary came with great mystery, and begged the emissary to follow him, but at a considerable distance, towards the apartments of Lord Burghley in the palace. Arriving there, they found the Lord-Treasurer accompanied by Cobham and Croft. Burghley instantly opened the interview by a defence of the Queen's policy in sending troops to the Netherlands, and in espousing their cause, and then the conversation proceeded to the immediate matter in hand.[1]

Bodman (after listening respectfully to the Lord-Treasurer's observations). "His Highness has, however, been extremely surprised that my Lord Leicester should take an oath, as governor-general of the King's Provinces. He is shocked likewise by the great demonstrations of hostility on the part of her Majesty."

Burghley.—"The oath was indispensable. The Queen was obliged to tolerate the step on account of the great urgency of the States to have a head. But her Majesty has commanded us to meet you on this occasion, in order to hear what you have to communicate on the part of the Prince of Parma."

Bodman (after a profusion of complimentary phrases). "I have no commission to say anything. I am only instructed to listen to anything that may be said to me, and that her Majesty may be pleased to command."

Burghley.—"'Tis very discreet to begin thus. But time is pressing, and it is necessary to be brief. We beg you therefore to communicate, without further preface, that which you have been charged to say."

Bodman.—"I can only repeat to your Lordship, that I have been charged to say nothing."

After this Barmecide feast of diplomacy, to partake of which it seemed hardly necessary that the guests should have

[1] 'Relacion de lo sucedido,' &c. (Arch. de Sim. MS. last cited.)

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previously attired themselves in such garments of mystery, the parties separated for the night.[1]

In spite of their care, it would seem that the Argus-eyed Walsingham had been able to see after sunset; for, the next evening—after Bodman had been introduced with the same precautions to the same company, in the same place—Burghley, before a word had been spoken, sent for Sir Francis.[2]

Bodman was profoundly astonished, for he had been expressly informed that Walsingham was to know nothing of the transaction.[3] The Secretary of State could not so easily be outwitted, however, and he was soon seated at the table, surveying the scene, with his grave melancholy eyes, which had looked quite through the whole paltry intrigue.

Burghley.—"Her Majesty has commanded us to assemble together, in order that, in my presence, it may be made clear that she did not commence this negotiation. Let Grafigni be summoned."

Grafigni immediately made his appearance.

Burghley.—"You will please to explain how you came to enter into this business."

Grafigni.—"The first time I went to the States, it was on my private affairs; I had no order from any one to treat with the Prince of Parma. His Highness, having accidentally heard, however, that I resided in England, expressed a wish to see me. I had an interview with the Prince. I told him, out of my own head, that the Queen had a strong inclination to hear propositions of peace, and that—as some of her counsellors were of the same opinion—I believed that if his Highness should send a negotiator, some good would be effected. The Prince replied that he felt by no means sure of such a result; but that, if I should come back from England, sent by the Queen or her council, he would then despatch a person with a commission to treat of peace. This statement, together with other matters that had passed

[1] 'Relacion de lo sucedido,' &c. MS. last cited. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

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between us, was afterwards drawn up in writing by command of his Highness."

Burghley.—"Who bade you say, after your second return to Brussels, that you came on the part of the Queen? For you well know that her Majesty did not send you."

Grafigni.—"I never said so. I stated that my Lord Cobham had set down in writing what I was to say to the Prince of Parma. It will never appear that I represented the Queen as desiring peace. I said that her Majesty *would lend her ears to peace.* Bodman knows this too; and he has a copy of the letter of his Highness."

Walsingham to Bodman.—"Have you the copy still?"

Bodman.—"Yes, Mr. Secretary."

Walsingham.—"Please to produce it, in order that this matter may be sifted to the bottom."

Bodman.—"I supplicate your Lorships to pardon me, but indeed that cannot be. My instructions forbid my showing the letter."

Walsingham (rising). "I will forthwith go to her Majesty, and fetch the original." A pause. Mr. Secretary returns in a few minutes, having obtained the document, which the Queen, up to that time, had kept by her, without showing it to any one.[1]

Walsingham (after reading the letter attentively, and aloud). "There is not such a word, as that her Majesty is desirous of peace, in the whole paper."[2]

Burghley (taking the letter, and slowly construing it out of Italian into English). "It would seem that his Highness hath written this, assuming that the Signor Grafigni came from the Queen, although he had received his instructions from my Lord Cobham. It is plain, however, that the negotiation was commenced accidentally.

Comptroller Croft (nervously, and with the air of a man fearful of getting into trouble). "You know very well, Mr. Bodman, that my servant came to Dunkirk only to buy and

[1] 'Relacion de lo sucedido,' &c. MS. before cited.

[2] 'Relacion,' &c. Compare Bruce's 'Leyc. Corresp.' 321, $\frac{24 \text{ June}}{4 \text{ July}}$, 1586; and 327, $\frac{30 \text{ June}}{10 \text{ July}}$, 1586.

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truck away horses; and that you then, by chance, entered into talk with him, about the best means of procuring a peace between the two kingdoms. My servant told you of the good feeling that prevailed in England. You promised to write on the subject to the Prince, and I immediately informed the Lord-Treasurer of the whole transaction."[1]

Burghley.—"That is quite true."

Croft.—"My servant subsequently returned to the Provinces in order to learn what the Prince might have said on the subject."

Bodman (with immense politeness,[2] but very decidedly). "Pardon me, Mr. Comptroller; but, in this matter, I must speak the truth, even if the honour and life of my father were on the issue. I declare that your servant Norris came to me, directly commissioned for that purpose by yourself, and informed me from you, and upon your authority, that if I would solicit the Prince of Parma to send a secret agent to England, a peace would be at once negotiated. Your servant entreated me to go to his Highness at Brussels. I refused, but agreed to consider the proposition. After the lapse of several days, the servant returned to make further enquiries. I told him that the Prince had come to no decision. Norris continued to press the matter. I excused myself. He then solicited and obtained from me a letter of introduction to De Loo, the secretary of his Highness. Armed with this, he went to Brussels and had an interview—as I found, four days later—with the Prince. In consequence of the representations of Norris, those of Signor Grafigni, and those by way of Antwerp, his Highness determined to send me to England."

Burghley to Croft.—"Did you order your servant to speak with Andrea de Loo?"

Croft.—"I cannot deny it."

Burghley.—"The fellow[3] seems to have travelled a good way out of his commission. His master sends him to buy horses, and he commences a peace-negotiation between two kingdoms. It would be well he were chastised. As regards the Antwerp

[1] 'Relacion,' &c. MS.

[2] "Con buena crianza," &c. 'Relacion,' &c. MS.

[3] "Mozo." (Ibid.)

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matter, too, we have had many letters, and I have seen one from the Seigneur de Champagny, to the same effect as that of all the rest.

Walsingham.—"I see not to what end his Highness of Parma has sent Mr. Bodman hither. The Prince avows that he hath no commission from Spain."

Bodman.—"His Highness was anxious to know what was her Majesty's pleasure. So soon as that should be known, the Prince could obtain ample authority. He would never have proceeded so far without meaning a good end."

Walsingham.—"Very like. I dare say that his Highness will obtain the commission. Meantime, as Prince of Parma, he writes these letters, and assists his sovereign perhaps more than he doth ourselves.[1]"

Here the interview terminated. A few days later, Bodman had another conversation with Burghley and Cobham. Reluctantly, at their urgent request, he set down in writing all that he had said concerning his mission. 14th July, 1586. The Lord Treasurer said that the Queen and her counsellors were "ready to embrace peace when it was treated of sincerely." Meantime the Queen had learned that the Prince had been sending letters to the cautionary towns in Holland and Zeeland, stating that her Majesty was about to surrender them to the King of Spain. These were tricks to make mischief, and were very detrimental to the Queen.

Bodman replied that these were merely the idle stories of quidnuncs; and that the Prince and all his counsellors were dealing with the utmost sincerity.

Burghley answered that he had intercepted the very letters, and had them in his possession.

A week afterwards, Bodman saw Walsingham alone, and was informed by him that the Queen had written an answer to Parma's letter, and that negotiations for the future were to be carried on in the usual form, or not at all. 20th July, 1586. Walsingham, having thus got the better of his rivals, and delved below their mines, dismissed the agent with brief courtesy. Afterwards the discomfited Mr. Comptroller wished a private inter-

[1] "Relacion, &c. MS.

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view with Bodman. Bodman refused to speak with him except in presence of Lord Cobham. This Croft refused. In the same way Bodman contrived to get rid, as he said, of Lord Burghley and Lord Cobham, declining to speak with either of them alone. Soon afterwards he returned to the Provinces.[1]

The Queen's letter to Parma was somewhat caustic. It was obviously composed through the inspiration of Walsingham rather than that of Burghley. The letter, brought by a certain Grafigni and a certain Bodman, she said, was a very strange one, and written under a delusion. It was a very grave error, that, in her name, without her knowledge, contrary to her disposition, and to the prejudice of her honour, such a person as this Grafigni, or any one like him, should have the audacity to commence such a business, as if she had, by messages to the Prince, sought a treaty with his King, who had so often returned evil for her good. Grafigni, after representing the contrary to his Highness, had now denied in presence of her counsellors having received any commission from the Queen. She also briefly gave the result of Bodman's interviews with Burghley and the others, just narrated. That agent had intimated that Parma would procure authority to treat for peace, if assured that the Queen would lend her ear to any propositions.

She replied by referring to her published declarations, as showing her powerful motives for interfering in these affairs. It was her purpose to save her own realm and to rescue her ancient neighbours from misery and from slavery. To this end she should still direct her actions, notwithstanding the sinister rumours which had been spread that she was inclined to peace before providing for the security and liberty of her allies. She was determined never to separate their cause from her own. Propositions tending to the security of herself and of her neighbours would always be favourably received.[2]

[1] 'Relacion de lo sucedido,' &c. MS. A similar account, with less detail, of these secret proceedings is in the State Paper Office, in the Holland Correspondence, entitled 'A declaration of the manner of treating of peace underhand to the Earl of Leicester.' MS. A° 1586.

[2] 'Carta descifrada de la Reyna de Inglaterra a Principe de Parma, 8 July, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

A copy is also—written in the Italian language—in the S. P. Office, Flanders Correspondence, MS.

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Parma, on his part, informed his master that there could be no doubt that the Queen and the majority of her council abhorred the war, and that already much had been gained by the fictitious negotiation. Lord-Treasurer Burghley had been interposing endless delays and difficulties in the way of every measure proposed for the relief of Lord Leicester, and the assistance rendered him had been most lukewarm. Meantime the Prince had been able, he said, to achieve much success in the field, and the English had done nothing to prevent it. Since the return of Grafigni and Bodman, however, it was obvious that the English government had disowned these non-commissioned diplomatists. The whole negotiation and all the negotiators were now discredited, but there was no doubt that there had been a strong desire to treat, and great disappointment at the result. Grafigni and Andrea de Loo had been publishing everywhere in Antwerp that England would consider the peace as made, so soon as his Majesty should be willing to accept any propositions.[1] 4 Aug. 1586.

His Majesty, meanwhile, sat in his cabinet, without the slightest intention of making or accepting any propositions save those that were impossible. He smiled benignantly at his nephew's dissimulation and at the good results which it had already produced. He approved of gaining time, he said, by fictitious negotiations and by the use of a mercantile agent; for, no doubt, such a course would prevent the proper succours from being sent to the Earl of Leicester. If the English would hand over to him the cautionary towns held by them in Holland and Zeeland, promise no longer to infest the seas, the Indies, and the Isles, with their corsairs, and guarantee the complete obedience to their King and submission to the holy Catholic Church of the rebellious Provinces, perhaps something might be done with them; but, on the whole, he was inclined to think that they had been influenced by knavish and deceitful motives from the beginning. He enjoined it upon Parma, therefore, to proceed with equal knavery —taking care, however, not to injure his reputation—and to enter into negotiations wherever occasion might serve, in order 18 Sept. 1586.

[1] Parma to Philip II. 4 Aug. 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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to put the English off their guard and to keep back the reinforcements so imperatively required by Leicester.[1]

And the reinforcements were indeed kept back. Had Burghley and Croft been in the pay of Philip II. they could hardly have served him better than they had been doing by the course pursued. Here then is the explanation of the shortcomings of the English government towards Leicester and the States during the memorable spring and summer of 1586. No money, no soldiers, when most important operations in the field were required. The first general of the age was to be opposed by a man who had certainly never gained many laurels as a military chieftain, but who was brave and confident, and who, had he been faithfully supported by the government which sent him to the Netherlands, would have had his antagonist at a great disadvantage. Alexander had scarcely eight thousand effective men. Famine, pestilence, poverty, mutiny, beset and almost paralyzed him. Language could not exaggerate the absolute destitution of the country. Only miracles could save the King's cause, as Farnese repeatedly observed. A sharp vigorous campaign, heartily carried on against him by Leicester and Hohenlo, with plenty of troops and money at command, would have brought the heroic champion of Catholicism to the ground. He was hemmed in upon all sides; he was cut off from the sea; he stood as it were in a narrowing circle, surrounded by increasing dangers. His own veterans, maddened by misery, stung by their King's ingratitude, naked, starving, ferocious, were turning against him. Mucio, like his evil genius, was spiriting away his supplies just as they were reaching his hands; a threatening tempest seemed rolling up from France; the whole population of the Provinces which he had "reconciled" —a million of paupers—were crying to him for bread; great commercial cities, suddenly blasted and converted into dens of thieves and beggars, were cursing the royal author of their ruin, and uttering wild threats against his vicegerent; there seemed, in truth, nothing left for Alexander but to plunge headlong into destruction, when, lo! Mr. Comptroller Croft,

[1] Philip II. to Parma, 18 July, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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advancing out of the clouds, like a propitious divinity, disguised in the garb of a foe—and the scene was changed.

The feeble old man, with his shuffling, horse-trucking servant, ex-spy of Monsieur, had accomplished more work for Philip and Alexander than many regiments of Spaniards and Walloons could have done. The arm of Leicester was paralyzed upon the very threshold of success. The picture of these palace-intrigues has been presented with minute elaboration, because, however petty and barren in appearance, they were in reality prolific of grave results. A series of victories by Parma was substituted for the possible triumphs of Elizabeth and the States.

The dissimulation of the Spanish court was fathomless. The secret correspondence of the times reveals to us that its only purpose was to deceive the Queen and her counsellors, and to gain time to prepare the grand invasion of England and subjugation of Holland—that double purpose which Philip could only abandon with life. There was never a thought, on his part, of honest negotiation. On the other hand, the Queen was sincere; Burghley and Hatton and Cobham were sincere; Croft was sincere, so far as Spain was concerned. At least they had been sincere. In the private and doleful dialogues between Bodman and Grafigni which we have just been overhearing, these intriguers spoke the truth, for they could have no wish to deceive each other, and no fear of eaves-droppers not to be born till centuries afterwards. These conversations have revealed to us that the Lord Treasurer and three of his colleagues had been secretly doing their best to cripple Leicester, to stop the supplies for the Netherlands, and to patch up a hurried and unsatisfactory, if not a disgraceful peace; and this, with the concurrence of her Majesty. After their plots had been discovered by the vigilant Secretary of State, there was a disposition to discredit the humbler instruments in the cabal. Elizabeth was not desirous of peace. Far from it. She was qualmish at the very suggestion. Dire was her wrath against Bodman, De Loo, Grafigni, and the rest, at their misrepresentations on the subject. But she would "lend her ear." And that royal ear was

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lent, and almost fatal was the distilment poured into its porches. The pith and marrow of the great Netherland enterprise was sapped by the slow poison of the ill-timed negotiation. The fruit of Drake's splendid triumphs in America was blighted by it. The stout heart of the vain-glorious but courageous Leicester was sickened by it, while, meantime, the maturing of the great armada-scheme, by which the destruction of England was to be accomplished, was furthered, through the unlimited procrastination so precious to the heart of Philip.

Fortunately the subtle Walsingham was there upon the watch to administer the remedy before it was quite too late; and to him England and the Netherlands were under lasting obligations. While Alexander and Philip suspected a purpose on the part of the English government to deceive them, they could not help observing that the Earl of Leicester was both deserted and deceived. Yet it had been impossible for the peace-party in the government wholly to conceal their designs, when such prating fellows as Grafigni and De Loo were employed in what was intended to be a secret negotiation. In vain did the friends of Leicester in the Netherlands endeavour to account for the neglect with which he was treated, and for the destitution of his army. Hopelessly did they attempt to counteract those "advertisements of most fearful instance," as Richard Cavendish expressed himself, which were circulating everywhere.[1]

Thanks to the babbling of the very men, whose chief instructions had been to hold their tongues, and to listen with all their ears, the secret negotiations between Parma and the English counsellors became the town-talk at Antwerp, the Hague, Amsterdam, Brussels, London. It is true that it was

[1] Cavendish to Burghley, 18 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

"Champagny doth not spare most liberally to bruit abroad," said Cavendish, "that he hath in his hands the conditions of peace offered by her Majesty unto the King his master, and that it is in his power to conclude at pleasure, wherein he affirmeth that one or two of the chiefest counsellors about her are to handle the cause with him. This fearful and mischievous plot cannot but prove the root of great ruin; for this people, beaten with tedious, long, and sharp miseries, is made wonderful provident and suspicious: *saying, that, if they would suffer the Spanish yoke anew, they need no mediator, for they can easily conclude for themselves, how, with least mischief, to become miserable again.*

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impossible to know what was actually said and done; but that there was something doing concerning which Leicester was not to be informed was certain. Grafigni, during one of his visits to the obedient provinces, brought a brace of greyhounds and a couple of horses from England, as a present to Alexander,[1] and he perpetually went about, bragging to every one of important negotiations which he was conducting, and of his intimacy with great personages in both countries. Leicester, on the other hand, was kept in the dark. To him Grafigni made no communications, but he once sent him a dish of plums, "which," said the Earl, with superfluous energy, "I will boldly say to you, by the living God, is all that I have ever had since I came into these countries."[2] When it is remembered that Leicester had spent many thousand pounds in the Netherland cause,[3] that he had deeply mortgaged his property in order to provide more funds, that he had never received a penny of salary from the Queen,[4] that his soldiers

[1] 'Leyc. Corresp.' 289, $\frac{6}{16}$ June, 1586.

[2] Ibid. 246, $\frac{28 \text{ April}}{8 \text{ May}}$, 1586.

[3] "I myself have prested," wrote the Earl to Burghley, "above 3000*l.* among our men here since I came, and yet what need they be in, even when there is most need of service, all the world here doth see. Here hath been as lewd and dangerous mutinies as I cannot but grieve to think on it," &c. March 29, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)

[4] On the 14 May, 1586, the States General resolved, in consequence of repeated applications on behalf of Leicester, for money for his own personal expenses by way of salary, that although the Queen had expressly agreed, by the contract with the States, to pay the salary of the governor-general and other military chiefs, they would themselves very willingly provide for his salary and maintenance, according to his petition. They previously requested Mr. Killigrew, however, to furnish them information as to how much monthly allowance her Majesty was then paying the lieutenant-general.

On the 16 May, 1586, the committee of the States appointed to confer with Mr. Killigrew concerning the amount of monthly allowance paid to the Earl of Leicester, reported that Mr. Killigrew had openly and roundly declared that his Excellency, up to that hour, had never received one stiver of salary, and that his Excellency had told him so, on the word of a prince. "De zelve Heere Killigrew hen opentlyk ende rondelyk heeft vercleert dat Zyne Ex^ce^ tot op deze ure toe nyet eenen styver voer tractement hadde ontfangen van heere Ma^t^., ende dat dezelve Zyne Ex^ce^ hem hadde geseyt en parole de prince, dat van zyn tractement by heere Ma^t^. nyet een woort was gesproken." Resolutien van de Staten-generael, a^o^ 1586. Hague Archives MS.

It was subsequently voted by the States General (4 July, 1586) that the Earl should receive a salary of 60,000 florins yearly to be drawn from the general duties upon cloth; and that in case her Majesty should continue in her refusal to contribute to his salary, the annual allowance furnished by the States should be increased to 100,000 florins.

Ten thousand pounds sterling a year in the sixteenth century was certainly a princely salary, and it was hardly becoming in the Queen, who refused to pay her own favourite "a stiver," to censure any shortcomings of the States, who proved themselves so much more liberal than herself. 'Resolutien,' &c. *ubi sup.*

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were "ragged and torn like rogues—pity to see them,"[1] and were left without the means of supporting life; that he had been neglected, deceived, humiliated, until he was forced to describe himself as a "forlorn man set upon a forlorn hope,"[2] it must be conceded that Grafigni's present of a dish of plums could hardly be sufficient to make him very happy.

From time to time he was enlightened by Sir Francis, who occasionally forced his adversaries' hands, and who always faithfully informed the Earl of everything he could discover. "We are so greedy of a peace, in respect of the charges of the wars," he wrote in April, "as in the procuring thereof we weigh neither honour nor safety. Somewhat here is a-dealing underhand, wherein there is great care taken that I should not be made acquainted withal."[3] But with all their great care, the conspirators, as it has been seen, were sometimes outwitted by the Secretary, and, when put to the blush, were forced to take him into half-confidence. "Your Lordship may see," he wrote, after getting possession of Parma's letter to the Queen, and unravelling Croft's intrigues, "what effects are wrought by such weak ministers. *They that have been the employers of them are ashamed of the matter.*"[4]

Unutterable was the amazement, as we have seen, of Bodman and Grafigni when they had suddenly found themselves confronted in Burghley's private apartments in Greenwich Palace, whither they had been conducted so mysteriously after dark from the secret pavilion—by the grave Secretary of State, whom they had been so anxious to deceive; and great was the embarrassment of Croft and Cobham, and even of the imperturbable Burghley.

And thus patiently did Walsingham pick his course, plummet in hand, through the mists and along the quicksands, and faithfully did he hold out signals to his comrade embarked on the same dangerous voyage. As for the Earl himself, he was shocked at the short-sighted policy of his mistress, mortified by the neglect to which he was exposed, disappointed in his ambitious schemes. Vehemently and

[1] Leyc. Corresp.' 285, $\frac{31 \text{ May}}{10 \text{ June}}$, 1586.

[2] Ibid. 290, $\frac{6}{16}$ June, 1586.

[3] Ibid. 223, $\frac{11}{21}$ April, 1586.

[4] Ibid. 321, $\frac{24 \text{ June}}{4 \text{ July}}$, 1586.

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judiciously he insisted upon the necessity of vigorous field-operations throughout the spring and summer thus frittered away in frivolous negotiations. He was for peace, if a lasting and honourable peace could be procured; but he insisted that the only road to such a result was through a "good sharp war."[1] His troops were mutinous for want of pay, so that he had been obliged to have a few of them executed, although he protested that he would rather have "gone a thousand miles a-foot"[2] than have done so; and he was crippled by his government at exactly the time when his great adversary's condition was most forlorn. Was it strange that the proud Earl should be fretting his heart away when such golden chances were eluding his grasp? He would "creep upon the ground," he said, "as far as his hands and knees would carry him, to have a good peace for her Majesty, but his care was to have a peace indeed, and not a show of it."[3] It was the cue of Holland and England to fight before they could expect to deal upon favourable terms with their enemy. He was quick enough to see that his false colleagues at home were playing into the enemy's hands. Victory was what was wanted; victory the Earl pledged himself, if properly seconded, to obtain; and, braggart though he was, it is by no means impossible that he might have redeemed his pledge. "If her Majesty will use her advantage," he said, "she shall bring the King, and especially this Prince of Parma, to seek peace in other sort than by way of merchants."[4] Of courage and confidence the governor had no lack. Whether he was capable of outgeneralling Alexander Farnese or no, will be better seen, perhaps, in subsequent chapters; but there is no doubt that he was reasonable enough in thinking, at that juncture, that a hard campaign rather than a "merchant's brokerage"[5] was required to obtain an honourable peace. Lofty, indeed, was the scorn of the aristocratic Leicester that "merchants and pedlars should be paltering in so weighty a cause,"[6] and

[1] 'Leyc. Corresp.' 254, $\frac{20 \text{ April}}{10 \text{ May}}$, 1586.
[2] Leicester to Burghley, 29 March, 1586. (S. P. Office MS.)
[3] 'Leyc. Corresp.' 253, $\frac{20 \text{ April}}{10 \text{ May}}$, 1586.
[4] Ibid. 251, same date.
[5] Ibid. 247, $\frac{28 \text{ April}}{8 \text{ May}}$, 1586.
[6] Ibid. 254, $\frac{20 \text{ April}}{10 \text{ May}}$, 1586

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daring to send him a dish of plums when he was hoping half a dozen regiments from the Queen; and a sorry business, in truth, the pedlars had made of it.

Never had there been a more delusive diplomacy, and it was natural that the lieutenant-general abroad and the statesman at home should be sad and indignant, seeing England drifting to utter shipwreck while pursuing that phantom of a pacific haven. Had Walsingham and himself tampered with the enemy, as some counsellors he could name had done, Leicester asserted that the gallows would be thought too good for them;[1] and yet he hoped he might be hanged if the whole Spanish faction in England could procure for the Queen a peace fit for her to accept.[2]

Certainly it was quite impossible for the Spanish faction to bring about a peace. No human power could bring it about. Even if England had been willing and able to surrender Holland, bound hand and foot, to Philip, even then she could only have obtained a hollow armistice. Philip had sworn in his inmost soul the conquest of England and the dethronement of Elizabeth. His heart was fixed. It was only by the subjugation of England that he hoped to recover the Netherlands. England was to be his stepping-stone to Holland. The invasion was slowly but steadily maturing, and nothing could have diverted the King from his great purpose. In the very midst of all these plots and counterplots, Bodmans and Grafignis, English geldings and Irish greyhounds, dishes of plums and autograph letters of her Majesty and his Highness, the Prince was deliberately discussing all the details of the invasion, which, as it was then hoped, would be ready by the autumn of the year 1586. Although he had sent a special agent to Philip, who was to state by word of mouth that which it was deemed unsafe to write,[3] yet Alexander, perpetually urged by his master, went at last more fully into particulars than he had ever ventured to do before; and this too at the very moment when Elizabeth was most seriously "lending her ear" to

1 'Leyc. Corresp.,' 254.

2 Ibid.

3 Parma to Philip II., 20 April, 1586. (Arch. de Sim. MS.) Also a paper epigraphed—'Lo que dijo J. B. Piata (the agent alluded to in the text) a Don Juan de Idiaquez, 24 June, 1586.' (Arch. de Sim. MS.)

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negotiation, and most vehemently expressing her wrath at Sir Thomas Heneage for dealing candidly with the States-General.[1]

The Prince observed that when, two or three years before, he had sent his master an account of the coasts, anchoring-places, and harbours of England, he had then expressed the opinion that the conquest of England was an enterprise worthy of the grandeur and Christianity of his Majesty, and not so difficult as to be considered altogether impossible. To make himself absolutely master of the business, however, he had then thought that the King should have no associates in the scheme, and should make no account of the inhabitants of England.[2] Since that time the project had become more difficult of accomplishment, because it was now a stale and common topic of conversation everywhere—in Italy, Germany, and France—so that there could be little doubt that rumours on the subject were daily reaching the ears of Queen Elizabeth and of every one in her kingdom. Hence she had made a strict alliance with Sweden, Denmark, the Protestant princes of Germany, and even with the Turks and the French. Nevertheless, in spite of these obstacles, the King, placing his royal hand to the work, might well accomplish the task; for the favour of the Lord, whose cause it was, would be sure to give him success.

Being so Christian and Catholic a king, Philip naturally desired to extend the area of the holy church, and to come to the relief of so many poor innocent martyrs in England, crying aloud before the Lord for help.[3] Moreover Elizabeth had fomented rebellion in the King's Provinces for a long time secretly, and now, since the fall of Antwerp, and just as Holland and Zeeland were falling into his grasp, openly.

Thus, in secret and in public, she had done the very worst she could do; and it was very clear that the Lord, for her sins, had deprived her of understanding,[4] in order that his Majesty might be the instrument of that chastisement which she so fully deserved. A monarch of such great prudence, valour, and talent as Philip, could now give all the world to

[1] MS. Letter of Parma to Philip, 20 April, 1586, before cited.

[2] "No haciendo caso de los proprios del pais." (Ibid.)

[3] "Tantos pobres y inocentes y martires qui sean esclamando delante del divino conspecto," &c. (Ibid.)

[4] "Que nuestro Señor por sus pecados le ha quitado de todo punto el entendimiento." (Ibid.)

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understand that those who dared to lose a just and decorous respect for him, as this good lady had done, would receive such chastisement as royal power guided by prudent counsel could inflict.[1] Parma assured his sovereign, that, if the conquest of England were effected, that of the Netherlands would be finished with much facility and brevity; but that otherwise, on account of the situation, strength and obstinacy of those people, it would be a very long, perilous, and at best doubtful business.[2]

"Three points," he said, "were most vital to the invasion of England—secrecy, maintenance of the civil war in France, and judicious arrangement of matters in the Provinces."

The French, if unoccupied at home, would be sure to make the enterprise so dangerous as to become almost impossible; for it might be laid down as a general maxim that that nation, jealous of Philip's power, had always done and would always do what it could to counteract his purposes.

With regard to the Netherlands, it would be desirable to leave a good number of troops in those countries—at least as many as were then stationed there—besides the garrisons, and also to hold many German and Swiss mercenaries in "wartgeld." It would be further desirable that Alexander should take most of the personages of quality and sufficiency in the Provinces over with him to England, in order that they should not make mischief in his absence.[3]

With regard to the point of secrecy, that was, in Parma's opinion, the most important of all. All leagues must become more or less public, particularly those contrived at or with Rome. Such being the case, the Queen of England would be well aware of the Spanish projects, and, besides her militia at home, would levy German infantry and cavalry, and provide plenty of vessels, relying therein upon Holland and Zeeland, where ships and sailors were in such abundance. Moreover, the English and the Netherlanders knew the coasts, currents, tides, shallows, quicksands, ports, better than did

[1] "Que no se han a perder el decoro y respeto a V. M. como lo ha hecho esta buena dama," &c. (Ibid.)

[2] "Se acabará con harta facilidad y brevedad lo de aca (viz. the Netherlands) q'se de otra manera, por la situacion, fortaleza, y obstinacion de estas gentes, sera negocio largo, peligroso, y aun dudoso." (Ibid.)

[3] MS. Letter of Parma to Philip, last cited.

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the pilots of any fleets that the King could send thither. Thus, having his back assured, the enemy would meet them in front at a disadvantage. Although, notwithstanding this inequality, the enemy would be beaten, yet if the engagement should be warm, the Spaniards would receive an amount of damage which could not fail to be inconvenient, particularly as they would be obliged to land their troops, and to give battle to those who would be watching their landing. Moreover the English would be provided with cavalry, of which his Majesty's forces would have very little, on account of the difficulty of its embarkation.[1]

The obedient Netherlands would be the proper place in which to organize the whole expedition. There the regiments could be filled up, provisions collected, the best way of effecting the passage ascertained, and the force largely increased without exciting suspicion; but with regard to the fleet, there were no ports there capacious enough for large vessels. Antwerp had ceased to be a seaport; but a large number of flat-bottomed barges, hoys, and other barks, more suitable for transporting soldiers, could be assembled in Dunkirk, Gravelines, and Newport, which, with some five-and-twenty larger vessels, would be sufficient to accompany the fleet.

The Queen, knowing that there were no large ships, nor ports to hold them in the obedient Provinces, would be unsuspicious, if no greater levies seemed to be making than the exigencies of the Netherlands might apparently require.

The flat-bottomed boats, drawing two or three feet of water, would be more appropriate than ships of war drawing twenty feet. The passage across, in favourable weather, might occupy from eight to twelve hours.

The number of troops for the invading force should be thirty thousand infantry, besides five hundred light troopers, with saddles, bridles, and lances, but without horses, because, in Alexander's opinion, it would be easier to mount them in England. Of these thirty thousand there should be six thousand Spaniards, six thousand Italians, six thousand Walloons, nine thousand Germans, and three thousand Burgundians.

[1] MS. Letter of Parma to Philip II. last cited.

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Much money would be required; at least three hundred thousand dollars the month for the new force, besides the regular one hundred and fifty thousand for the ordinary provision in the Netherlands; and this ordinary provision would be more necessary than ever, because a mutiny breaking forth in the time of the invasion would be destruction to the Spaniards both in England and in the Provinces.

The most appropriate part of the coast for a landing would, in Alexander's opinion, be between Dover and Margate, because the Spaniards, having no footing in Holland and Zeeland, were obliged to make their starting-point in Flanders. The country about Dover was described by Parma as populous, well-wooded, and much divided by hedges; advantageous for infantry, and not requiring a larger amount of cavalry than the small force at his disposal, while the people there were domestic in their habits, rich, and therefore less warlike, less trained to arms, and more engrossed by their occupations and their comfortable ways of life.[1] Therefore, although some encounters would take place, yet after the commanders of the invading troops had given distinct and clear orders, it would be necessary to leave the rest in the hands of God who governs all things, and from whose bounty and mercy it was to be hoped that He would favour a cause so eminently holy, just, and His own.[2]

It would be necessary to make immediately for London, which city, not being fortified, would be very easily taken. This point gained, the whole framework of the business might be considered as well put together.[3] If the Queen should fly —as, being a woman, she probably would do—everything would be left in such confusion, as, with the blessing of God, it might soon be considered that the holy and heroic work had been accomplished.[4] Her Majesty, it was suggested,

1 "Domestica y rica, y la gente de ella consiguiente es menos armigera y bellicosa, y dada a sus trabajos y comodidades." MS. Letter of Parma, before cited.

2 "En manos de Dios qui gobierna todas las cosas, y de cuya bondad y misericordia se debe esperar que favoreceera causa tan santa, justa, y propria suya." (Ibid.)

3 "Sara tan facil de ganar, lo cual conseguido, se puede tener por tan buen entablado el negocio." (Ibid.)

4 "Se acogiesse, como siendo muger es de creer . . . . . con la ayuda de nº Señor, podria tener por acabada obra tan suya y heroica." MS. Letter of Parma, before cited.

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would probably make her escape in a boat before she could be captured; but the conquest would be nevertheless effected. Although, doubtless, some English troops might be got together to return and try their fortune, yet it would be quite useless; for the invaders would have already planted themselves upon the soil, and then, by means of frequent excursions and forays hither and thither about the island, all other places of importance would be gained, and the prosperous and fortunate termination of the adventure assured.[1]

As, however, everything was to be provided for, so, in case the secret could not be preserved, it would be necessary for Philip, under pretext of defending himself against the English and French corsairs, to send a large armada to sea, as doubtless the Queen would take the same measure. If the King should prefer, however, notwithstanding Alexander's advice to the contrary, to have confederates in the enterprise,—then, the matter being public, it would be necessary to prepare a larger and stronger fleet than any which Elizabeth, with the assistance of her French and Netherland allies, could oppose to him. That fleet should be well provided with vast stores of provisions, sufficient to enable the invading force, independently of forage, to occupy three or four places in England at once, as the enemy would be able to come from various towns and strong places to attack them.

As for the proper season for the expedition, it would be advisable to select the month of October of the current year, because the English barns would then be full of wheat and other forage, and the earth would have been sown for the next year—points of such extreme importance, that if the plan could not be executed at that time, it would be as well to defer it until the following October.[2]

The Prince recommended that the negotiations with the League should be kept spinning, without allowing them to come to a definite conclusion; because there would be no lack of difficulties perpetually offering themselves,[3] and the more

[1] "Discurriendo la isla, ganando plazas de importancia . . . . . y se puede tener por asegurado el prospero y felice fin." (Ibid.)

[2] Ibid.

[3] "Que la platica de la liga vaya adelante sin concluyrse, alargardola todo lo que se pudiese, pues no faltaran dificultades que se ofreceran." (Ibid.)

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intricate and involved the policy of France, the better it would be for the interests of Spain. Alexander expressed the utmost confidence that his Majesty, with his powerful arm, would overcome all obstacles in the path of his great project, and would show the world that he "could do a little more than what was possible."[1] He also assured his master, in most extravagant language, of his personal devotion, adding that it was unnecessary for him to offer his services in this particular enterprise, because, ever since his birth, he had dedicated and consecrated himself to execute his royal commands.

He further advised that old Peter Ernest Mansfeld should be left commander-in-chief of the forces in the Netherlands during his own absence in England. "Mansfeld was an honourable cavalier," he said, "and a faithful servant of the King; and although somewhat ill-conditioned at times, yet he had essential good qualities, and was the only general fit to be trusted alone.[2]

The reader, having thus been permitted to read the inmost thoughts of Philip and Alexander, and to study their secret plans for conquering England in October, while their frivolous yet mischievous negotiations with the Queen had been going on from April to June, will be better able than before to judge whether Leicester were right or no in doubting if a good peace could be obtained by a "merchant's brokerage."

And now, after examining these pictures of inter-aulic politics and back-stairs diplomacy, which represent so large and characteristic a phasis of European history during the year 1586, we must throw a glance at the external, more stirring, but not more significant public events which were taking place during the same period.

[1] "Y se llegará a hacer algo mas de lo posible." (Ibid.) [2] Ibid.

END OF VOL. I.

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